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The Nation.

November 8, 1986 $1.25; U.K. 85p

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EDITORIAL

FAST EDDIE v. HONEST ABE

Attorney General Edwin Meese 3d is again trying to undermine the Supreme Court's role in protecting individual rights and liberties. This time he aims not at specific doctrines but at the very heart of the Court's role: the principle that its decisions are the law of the land, binding on all state and Federal government officials.

Meese criticizes the 1958 ruling in *Cooper v. Aaron*, in which the Court declared that its decisions are the "supreme law of the land," as a "conclusion that would have shocked John Marshall." In fact, Marshall had an expansive view of judicial power, but more important, Meese ignores the Court's specific ruling in *Cooper v. Aaron*. It rejected Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus's claim that the State of Arkansas was not bound to obey the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* that school segregation was unconstitutional. The Attorney General seems to think that Faubus was right and that the other Southern legislatures that vowed to defy *Brown* were entitled to do so.

Meese praises Federal Judge Daniel Manion for once having co-sponsored in the Indiana Legislature a bill on school prayer that Manion conceded was inconsistent with a Supreme Court decision. Manion, it will be recalled, was considered unqualified for the bench by forty law school deans and more than 200 law professors. Meese justifies Manion's action by quoting Lincoln's statement that "if the policy of the government upon vital questions . . . is to be irrevocably fixed by decisions of the Supreme Court . . . the people will have ceased to be their own rulers." But Lincoln never approved of defying the Supreme Court's rulings, as the Attorney General seems to. It was Lincoln, after all, who said, "Let reverence for the laws . . . become the political religion of the nation."

GEORGE GIPP LIVES
Calvin Trillin

LETTER FROM TEXAS
Molly Ivins

THE U.M.W. TURNS AROUND
Nicolaus Mills

MEXICAN POLITICS
William A. Orme Jr.

L.S.D./C.I.A.
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NEOSECURITY POLICY

ARMS AND THE DEMOCRATS

MICHAEL T. KLARE

This Administration—contrary to its every declaration—is not serious about the defense of this country.

The above accusation comes not from some far-right fanatic, but from Democratic Party defense oracle Representative Les Aspin of Wisconsin, and a growing number of Democratic stalwarts share his thinking. Once regarded as soft on national security, mainstream Democrats are rapidly adopting a hard line on U.S. military policy.

This new stance is evident in the statements of many party leaders, as well as in Colorado Senator Gary Hart's new book, *America Can Win*, and the Democratic Policy Commission's report, *New Choices in a Changing America* [see "Armadillo Democrats," *The Nation*, October 4]. Both the book and the report sport red-white-and-blue covers and contain numerous appeals to patriotism. Both, moreover, ardently condemn the Reagan Administration for allegedly failing to reverse the military "inferiority" of the United States vis-à-vis the Soviet Union.

"Not a single unfavorable element of the U.S.-Soviet military balance has been reversed by all the spending" of the Reagan era, Hart charges in *America Can Win*. "One trillion dollars has not turned inferiority into superiority anywhere." Indeed, he claims, the very opposite is the case: by spending all our money on costly high-tech weapons that can only be acquired in small numbers, the Administration has actually committed the United States to "involuntary unilateral disarmament."

While acknowledging that previous Democratic spokesmen (read, Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale) may have been less attentive than

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LETTERS.

MY AIM IS TRUE

Washington

I was flattered that *The Nation* devoted nearly an entire issue to our humble efforts to promote greater accuracy and fairness in news reporting. However, duty compels me to point out a sampling of the flaws in your two articles and editorial [Sept. 13].

Michael Massing has not learned the first rule of media criticism ["The Rise and Decline of Accuracy in Media"]. One should never make accusations of error without being prepared to provide the evidence to back up the charge. He quotes my critics as saying that I "throw around accusations about people being communists," that my complaints are "routinely wrong," that my "specifics . . . are frequently wrong," that my criticism was "full of lies" and was "off-the-mark," "ill-informed" and "unprofessional."

All of this should lead the reader to expect that a cornucopia of error could be laid at my feet. But apparently Massing did not elicit from my accusers any evidence to back up their charges. The only example of a factual error on my part that he cited was my mistaken assumption that the Peter Davis who was to produce *Mandela* was the same Peter Davis who produced *Hearts and Minds*. I would assume that Massing must have asked Don Graham, Jim Hoagland, Dick Harwood, Dave Marash and Nina Totenberg—who made the charges cited above—to provide proof for what they said. If so, they obviously didn't come up with anything that he found usable against me.

Who is it that is throwing around wild accusations and making false charges? Is it Reed Irvine or is it critics such as those? *The Nation*'s editorial accuses me of employing "threats and blackmail," but no evidence of either is provided. Massing says I use "ugly tactics." He cites, I presume as evidence, a few cases in which I have mentioned charges about reporters that have been disputed but not disproven. These include an allegation that Raymond Bonner had said he had ties to the Pacific News Service, that Sidney Schanberg had expected the Khmer Rouge to welcome him as a hero, and that Elizabeth Becker had walked out of a news conference, saying, "Who needs to listen to this junk?" In each case I had presented those as allegations, not as proven facts. That's more than Massing did in relaying what my accusers have said about me.

Massing was a bit too eager to swallow any negative statement that he heard about me. Unfortunately, my detractors don't have perfect memories and they aren't always careful to check the record before they speak. For example, ABC's Robert Siegenthaler was quoted as saying that a letter I sent him criticizing the network's documentary, *The Fire Unleashed*, was very vague and lacking "substantiation." It was so worthless that he didn't even bother to discuss it with the producers. That's a very damning statement. The only trouble with it is that I never wrote Siegenthaler a letter criticizing that particular documentary. We did do an "AIM Report" about it, and it was certainly not vague or lacking in substantiation.

Massing similarly swallowed without question Capital Legal Foundation's explanation of why they didn't get any of the money AIM had raised at their request to help fund General Westmoreland's libel suit against CBS. He had in his possession a written statement I had given him in which I explained that AIM had insisted on documentary proof that any funds it provided were used exclusively on the Westmoreland case. The documentation was refused on the ground that providing it to us would violate the lawyer-client relationship. The chair of the board of Capital Legal tried to persuade us to drop the documentation requirement, but he did not claim that providing it would "create excessive paperwork," as Massing claims. That's a Massing exclusive. I know of one other potential donor, a foundation, which made the same request we did. Its request was also refused, and it also declined to contribute.

AIM was not frozen out of any involvement in the Westmoreland libel suit. We removed ourselves. I did not advise General Westmoreland to sue, but when he decided to do so, I advised him to get a lawyer with experience in libel cases. With the benefit of hindsight, I believe I was wrong in not urging him to sue and right in suggesting that he engage an experienced lawyer. It turned out that he had a winnable case, but it was badly handled.

Alan Wolfe is, if anything, even more reckless than Massing in making unsupported and unsupportable accusations ["The Real Aim Is Ideological"]. He accuses me of striving to become a "quasi-public Office of Censorship." Since when is writing letters such as this one equivalent to censorship? I thought it was an exercise of my First Amendment rights. He says I want to limit the freedom of others to say what they believe.

I have emphasized over and over again that it is not AIM's job to challenge others' opinions, but I think it is perfectly legitimate to criticize factual inaccuracy. Wolfe and Massing have a perfect right to say things that aren't true, and I have an equal right to try to set the record straight. If they find it chilling to be confronted with embarrassing exposure of their errors, they will, hopefully, try to be more accurate in the future. But I have no power to keep them from being careless if they can't break the habit.

Let me cite only two of Wolfe's easily demonstrable inaccuracies. He says that I can't mention Bella Abzug "without citing her membership in left-wing organizations all the way back to 1944." In fourteen years of "AIM Reports," Abzug has been mentioned four times. In only one of those cases was there any mention of her left-wing history, and that was in a transcript of remarks by Murray Baron, AIM's president, at a meeting with Arthur Ochs Sulzberger of *The New York Times*.

Wolfe says I have been "extremely active in defending the Federal Communications Commission and the fairness rule against efforts of the Reagan Administration to deregulate television." He later says that I come "regularly to the defense of the F.C.C." The fact is that it is the F.C.C. that is trying to get rid of the fairness doctrine, and I have severely criticized them for that. This is obviously not a field in which Wolfe has any expertise, but his lack of knowledge does not prevent him from writing about it. Unfortunately, that is all too characteristic of many who presume to inform and educate the public. That is why Accuracy in Media is necessary and why it has won as much support as it has.

If AIM has had any influence, it is because we have done our research, marshaled our facts and let them speak for themselves, not resorting to reckless rhetoric of the type found in the articles by Massing and Wolfe. I have ordered 1,000 reprints of their articles and I plan to use them to show how criticism that is not supported by factual evidence is not only ineffective but counterproductive. I must thank *The Nation* for providing us with this excellent educational tool.

Even your most faithful readers must wonder why you spent so much time and space knocking AIM if we are in decline and as ineffective as your articles contend. I can see why no mention was made of the fact that our second television documentary, *Television's Vietnam: The Impact of Media*, has been praised by President Reagan as a film that all Americans should see and has been accepted for airing by 110 public television stations and the Armed Forces Radio and Television Network despite the refusal of PBS to include it in its program schedule. I will look forward to seeing *The Nation*'s review of it.

Reed Irvine
Accuracy in Media

MASSING REPLIES

New York City

Reed Irvine reminds me of someone who, after firing tear gas into a crowd, accosts his choking, gasping victims and shrieks, "My eyes are watering!" I was hoping—naïvely, I admit—that Irvine might take my article as a spur to clean up his act. Instead, he's written to all those I quoted in the piece demanding to know why they don't respect him. Even Rodney Dangerfield wouldn't go that far.

As for Irvine's specific complaints, they seem niggling indeed. Although the claims about *The Fire Unleashed* were contained in

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Manuscripts: All work submitted will be read by the editors. The magazine cannot, however, be responsible for the return of unsolicited manuscripts unless they are accompanied by self-addressed stamped envelopes.

Publisher, Hamilton Fish 3rd

Associate Publisher, David Parker; *Advertising Director,* Chris Calhoun; *Business Manager,* Ann B. Epstein; *Bookkeepers,* Tanveer Mall, Ivor A. Richardson; *Art/Production Manager,* Jane Sharples; *Circulation Director,* Stephen W. Soule; *Director of Development and Publicity,* Micah L. Sifry; *Subscription Manager,* Cookee V. Klein; *Assistant Advertising Manager,* Neil Black; *Receptionist,* Greta Loell; *Mail Clerk,* John Holtz; *Administrative Secretary,* Shirley Sulat; *Production,* Terry Miller; *Typography,* Randall Cherry, Mitchel Cohen, Sandy McCroskey, Richard Snyder; *Nation Associates Director,* Nancy Bacher; *Nation News Service,* Jeff Sorensen; *Publishing Consultant,* Phillip Frazer.

The Nation (ISSN 0027-8378) is published weekly (except for the first week in January, and biweekly in July and August) by The Nation Company, Inc. Directors: Arthur Carter, Hamilton Fish 3rd, Victor Navasky. © 1986 in the U.S.A. by The Nation Company, Inc., 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011. (212) 242-8400. *Washington Bureau:* Suite 308, 110 Maryland Avenue N.E., Washington, DC 20002. (202) 546-2239. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. International Telex: 667 155 NATION. Subscription orders, changes of address and all subscription inquiries: *The Nation,* Box 1953, Marion, OH 43305. *Subscription Price:* One year, $45; two years, $81. Add $9 for postage outside U.S. Claims for missed issues must be made within 60 days (120 days foreign) of publication date. **Please allow 6-8 weeks for receipt of your first issue and for all subscription transactions.** Back issues $3 prepaid ($4 foreign) from: *The Nation,* 72 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10011. *The Nation* is available on microfilm from: University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

EDITORIALS.

Fans and Voters

It was 12:30 A.M. on a chilly Sunday, and the New York Mets were about to lose the World Series. They were trailing the Boston Red Sox 5–3 with two outs in the bottom of the tenth. Gary Carter stood at the plate with two strikes on him, and spectators across the country waited for the final strike that would give Boston their fourth victory and the championship. Instead, Carter got a hit that sparked a Met rally and rattled the Red Sox. Three runs were scored, and the Mets won 6–5. Monday night they clinched the series.

The country was captivated, and why not? The saying that the game isn't over until the last out proved true after all, a lesson that was quickly cited by underdogs in this week's elections.

But there are other resemblances between the series and the elections which seem worth pondering. Both sometimes appeared to be staged solely as media events. The fifth game began a half-hour late so that NBC would not have to cancel the top-rated *Cosby Show*. The series was played at night so that the networks could reap the profits of prime-time advertising. And it was played at the end of October—in weather so cold that pitchers built bonfires in the bullpen—because the postseason playoffs had been extended to seven

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games in order to increase revenues. The media likewise dominated the elections. In many states, the most important races were between media consultants, not candidates. Money that used to go into field organizations was instead poured into expensive commercials.

Because the public is mesmerized by the World Series, the newspapers, television, radio, the weeklies and the news magazines all embarked on a two-week educational campaign, immersing us in the players' averages, prospects, strategies and styles. But media attention can also stimulate public interest. Imagine if such free media coverage were accorded to national politics as we got down to the wire.

As it is now, incumbents decline to participate in televised debates, cynically seeking to deprive lesser-known opponents of "free publicity." In fact, they are depriving the electorate of the chance to make an informed decision, and turning over the democratic process to the advertising agencies.

To project an image successfully, most candidates wind up compromising the reality, as their sponsors, the PACs, claim votes in exchange for financial contributions. Turning baseball into a business has brought us games that some people can't stay up late enough to watch; turning politics into one has brought us shadow campaigns that few care to watch.

Yet there was something real going on in the early hours of that October morning. When everyone knew that they had been licked, the Mets came back with guts and grace. We can all learn from their example.

'NATION' NOTES

We are pleased to announce that Michael Pertschuk, a frequent *Nation* contributor, is joining our editorial board. He was consumer counsel and staff director of the Senate Commerce Committee for twelve years, chaired the Federal Trade Commission for four years and stayed on as dissident-in-residence in the Reagan F.T.C. for three years more. Now, as co-director of the Advocacy Institute in Washington, he teaches citizen groups to lobby effectively. His new book, *Giantkillers*, has just been published by W.W. Norton.

* * *

Nation writers and editors will speak out on issues of national and global concern on our new radio program, *Voice of The Nation*. Every month we will make available three short commentaries on current affairs to over 1,000 public radio stations and community broadcasters with millions of potential listeners. You can help us reach that audience. Call your public or college radio station or community broadcaster and tell the program director about *Voice of The Nation*. The first show will be beamed over the public radio satellite on Channel 3 on November 14 at 2 P.M. By urging your local program director to tape *Voice of The Nation* and broadcast it, you will be adding your voice to ours.

After Duvalier

The first Haitian elections since the downfall of Jean-Claude Duvalier took place on October 19. These elections—for positions on a commission that is to write the new Haitian Constitution—were billed by the provisional military junta as a curtain raiser to the presidential elections scheduled for next November. At the last minute, however, the junta decided to insure its control by appointing one-third of the commissioners.

A few days before the vote, demonstrators massed in the outskirts of Port-au-Prince, and several members of the Committee for Democratic Unity announced a hunger strike to emphasize their objections to the election and the junta-appointed commissioners. Two of the most prominent strikers, José Sinaï and Jean-Paul Duperval, were immediately arrested. Several days later, the offices of the League of Former Political Prisoners, whose president had protested their detention, were ransacked. When election day came, less than 10 percent of the electorate voted, but it was unclear whether that was the result of an organized boycott or of a sense among the electorate that the election was meaningless. Sinaï and Duperval have since been released.

All of this takes place in a Duvalierist climate of fear and insecurity that has been perpetuated by the army under the current leadership. In September, for example, a literacy teacher named Charlot Jacquelin was dragged from his home in Cité Soleil, a large shantytown outside of Port-au-Prince. Jacquelin has not been heard from since. A former head of the palace guards, Col. Jean Valmé, retired, and a former mayor of Port-au-Prince, Franck Romain, both infamous torturers, were released from jail and reportedly allowed to leave the country, even though a court martial had found reason for them to stand trial. When the head of the notorious Tontons Macoute and the chief of the secret police slipped out earlier this year, the Justice Minister resigned in protest. This time, the new Justice Minister remains in office.

On October 9, Americas Watch and the National Coalition for Haitian Refugees issued a seventy-five-page report on Haitian human rights titled "Duvalierism Since Duvalier." In it they charge that the junta "has taken few significant steps to transcend the Duvalier legacy of terror, cronyism and corruption." They also note that the State Department had "rushed to put a stamp of approval on the human rights practices of the Duvalier-appointed provisional government."

Is infant Haitian justice imperiled? Enter the U.S. State Department. A new program of the Agency for International Development will provide assistance for such important activities as publication and distribution of law codes and rehabilitation of court facilities. Another program, funded by the U.S. Information Agency, brought influential Haitians to the United States to witness this country's electoral system in motion on November 4.

The State Department's approach begs the vital question: What kind of government includes beatings, arbitrary detentions and attacks on peaceful demonstrators in its "effort to

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democratize"? Surely not one that will be deterred by watching Americans pull the lever at the local public school.

Let's Go Nics

Managua

On opening day of the Nicaraguan baseball season, the leading Sandinista sportswriter, Edgard Tijerino, sidled up and stuck a radio mike under my nose. "How do we know you are really a journalist," he said fiercely, "and not—," his face flushed with suppressed laughter, "a scout!" I whispered, "I'm undercover for the Yankees," and we howled and slapped palms.

That was just last month, on the eve of the Hasenfus trial. Tijerino's humor was as quirky as a knuckle ball. The Sandinistas have reason to worry about clandestine major league scouts snatching their top players because it has happened, but they have less reason than they think; there are few prospects on the ten teams of their state-sponsored amateur big league. Five Nicaraguans have made it to the major leagues, but the current stars are mostly too old, and the young players risk losing their draft exemption if they sign a professional contract.

Nicaraguan newspapers cover U.S. baseball but never publish U.S. sports salaries. "We'd lose the good players we have," admits Tijerino.

"This is the first time in history that the sports pages have been subjected to political censorship," said Juan Navarro, former sports editor of *La Prensa*, shut down five months ago by the Sandinistas. There was a rule, he said, that no headline could appear in which an athlete with the same name as a government leader was knocked out, defeated or criticized. He recalled one headline that never made it past government blue pencils: "Ortega Commits Error; Atlantic Coast Collapses." A third baseman, no relation to the President, had muffed a grounder and lost a game.

Navarro recounted that the censors cut "zero" out of headlines, claiming a *La Prensa* plot to remind the people subliminally that Commander Zero was still in the game. Navarro's laughter was dark and hard to read; I wondered how many of those headlines had been written just to needle the government.

Navarro and Tijerino agree that their national pastime is hurting. The national team, a perennial powerhouse before the revolution, now rarely wins international amateur tournaments. But they disagree about the causes of the decline.

Tijerino says it's money: the war against the *contras* and the U.S. embargo make it impossible to import the trainers, coaches, sports medicine supplies and conditioning equipment necessary to field a world-class competitor. I saw players lift one another in lieu of weights. An army factory manufactures cheap gloves and soft, dead, rubber-centered baseballs.

Navarro says it's politics: commissars, not coaches, select the national team, especially for such trips as the recent Bats Not Bombs tour of California colleges. A politically correct attitude, he says, counts more than a hot bat or a live arm, especially when a defection would take the story off the sports page.

Tijerino writes for the official newspaper, *Barricada*, and conducts the enormously popular midday radio show, *Doble Play*. He says he feels free to criticize baseball performance, coaching decisions, even such government actions as the raising of ticket prices this season, which has kept most fans from the ballpark. But he ducks the big question: Is the mounting dissatisfaction with Sandinista baseball a metaphor? Navarro thinks—hopes—it is.

Neither of them found anything ironic about the local interest in the World Series. After all, baseball has been here since the turn of the century, when students brought it back from U.S. colleges. The game flourished during the Marine occupations. Nicaraguans may be learning to hate the U.S. government and may withhold judgment on the U.S. people, but they simply love U.S. baseball.

On the first night of the World Series I watched the game in a Managua hotel whose satellite dish could pirate the NBC signal. Paying inflated prices for the event, fat-cat families and groups of men drank and cheered the Mets and Los Medias Rojas in the hotel's rooms and bars. Three men from a private radio station huddled around a TV set transmitting in Spanish out to the streets. During the regular major league season they listen to games on American Armed Forces Radio and broadcast their own re-created and embellished version, much like those U.S. sportscasters of fifty years ago who sat in studios spinning heroic yarns from the spare play-by-play clicking in over the ticker tape.

When I told them that what they were doing was sort of how Ronald Reagan got started, we howled and slapped palms.

ROBERT LIPSYTE

Robert Lipsyte, a correspondent for NBC, is the author of SportsWorld: An American Dreamland *(Times Books).*

WE'RE #2

The $100 million *contra* aid package which the President signed into law on October 24 includes $3 million for the United Nicaraguan Opposition to monitor its own human rights abuses. This windfall makes the *contras* the second-best-funded human rights group in the world.

Only Amnesty International, which has forty-five national sections and monitors every government in the world, has more money. The New York–based Fund for Free Expression's Watch Committees—Americas Watch, Helsinki Watch and Asia Watch—function on half the *contras'* human rights budget. The conservative Freedom House also has about $1.5 million to work with each year. And the Inter-American Human Rights Commission of the Organization of American States, which has to deal with an entire continent, has an annual budget of a shade over $1 million.

For details on how the *contras* spent last year's human rights appropriation, watch these pages.

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

After the Press Bus Left

Back in May of this year, nine months into the strike of Local P-9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers against Hormel, some workers and artists dedicated a magnificent mural. Measuring eighty by sixteen feet on an outdoor wall of the Labor Center in Austin, Minnesota, it depicted the enduring struggle of workers. It showed a woman swinging with a cleaver at the serpent of exploitation wrapped around the smokestacks of a factory. It showed faceless workers going in one end of the factory and coming out with their features delineated and their fists raised. It showed scenes from the 1933 Austin meatpackers' strike and from farm protest movements. A banner with a verse from a turn-of-the-century poem read, "If blood be the price of your cursed wealth, good God we have paid in full."

The mural was conceived by Denny Mealy, a P-9 member and self-taught artist, and Mike Alewitz, a professional muralist from Virginia who went to P-9's national solidarity rallies in April and stayed to work on the painting without pay. You can see one of Alewitz's political murals in León, Nicaragua. Mealy lined up support from other unions at the Labor Center and from the Twin Cities; they donated time and—from the St. Paul's Sign and Display Local 880—forty gallons of paint. More than one hundred P-9 members were involved in the project. The final product was dedicated to Nelson Mandela.

As many in this sad world know, P-9 found an enemy as remorseless as Hormel in the form of its own international union, the U.F.C.W., which finally forced the local into trusteeship, signed a contract with the company, and then began a purge of the strike movement. Determined to extirpate the memory and culture of P-9's struggle, the U.F.C.W. ordered sandblasting of the mural. No union shop would do the job, so the U.F.C.W. had to use its own organizers for the dirty work. A court order has temporarily halted the destruction of the mural, but too late to save the first targets of the sandblasters' attack: the word "Solidarity" and the faces of the hitherto faceless workers.

Double Your Standard

Perhaps when he goes to Oslo to make his formal speech in acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize, Elie Wiesel will extend the limits he appears to have set on his moral compassion and on his readiness to assail the crime of silence. For although the Nobel committee extolled him as a "messenger to mankind," it is difficult to find examples of Wiesel sending any message on behalf of those victimized by the policies of the United States, and virtually impossible when it comes to victims of Israel.

Wiesel's pusillanimity was well illustrated in an interview with *The National Jewish Post & Opinion* for November 19, 1982. Asked about the massacre of Palestinians at Sabra and Shatila, he said he felt "sad." Lest anyone leap to the erroneous conclusion that Wiesel was at last expressing sadness for the victims of Israel's invasion—he had remained silent throughout the bombing of Beirut—Wiesel added that this sadness was "with Israel, and not against Israel." As he put it, "After all, the Israeli soldiers did not kill."

Last year, Wiesel was asked by a reporter from *Ha'aretz* about Israel's aid to the military junta in Guatemala. By way of response Wiesel remarked that he had received a letter from a Nobel laureate (Salvador Luria of M.I.T. had written to him on this subject a month earlier) documenting Israel's contributions to mass murder in Guatemala and urging Wiesel to act privately to pressure Israel. Wiesel "sighed," the *Ha'aretz* reporter wrote, and said, "I usually answer at once, but what can I answer him."

Wiesel could, I suppose, argue that a sigh constitutes a technical breach of silence, but why did he not go further? In an interview published in the second volume of *Against Silence*, Wiesel says that, as a Diaspora Jew, the "price I chose to pay for not living in Israel . . . is not to criticize Israel from outside its borders." In another interview, published in the London *Jewish Chronicle* for September 10, 1982, he lamented criticism of Israel during the Lebanon invasion and asked these rhetorical questions:

> Was it necessary to criticise the Israeli government, notwithstanding the spate of lies disseminated in the press? Or would it not have been better to have offered Israel unreserved support, regardless of the suffering endured by the population of Beirut? In the face of hatred, our love for Israel ought to have deepened, become more whole-hearted, and our faith in Israel more compelling, more true.

It's unclear how many times, if any, Wiesel has ventured criticism inside Israel's borders. Wiesel himself mentions one occasion on which he exerted what is usually called quiet pressure. Commentary on Wiesel in the Hebrew-language press in Israel following the award of the Nobel Peace Prize has been more robust than the statutory honorifics printed in the United States. In *Davar*, for example, a reporter named Miri Paz discussed the troubled course of a conference on holocaust and genocide held in Israel in the summer of 1982. Responding to the urgings of the Turkish government, the Israeli Foreign Ministry demanded the removal of six items on the agenda concerning the Armenian genocide. Several people on the conference's organizing committee, including its chair, Professor Israel Charny, refused to bend to such interference. But Wiesel, who headed the conference, did weaken. He pulled out of the conference, explaining, in Paz's words, that "as a Jew he cannot act against the government of Israel." In *Koteret Rashit*, a liberal weekly, Tom Segev wrote of Wiesel:

> He is always careful not to criticize his nation. . . . What does he have to say about the situation in the territories? When people from Peace Now asked him to criticize the Lebanese War he evaded the request. He's never been in the habit of standing up seriously against Israeli leaders. . . . What in fact has he done to realize his fine intentions? Bob Geldof has done more. . . . How nice it would have been if they had divided the prize among those truly good people of the world, those still alive, those people who endangered their lives at the time of the Holocaust in order to save Jews.

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

Who symbolizes the lesson of the Holocaust as they do? Who is as worthy of the respect of the world as they are?

Battle of the BM's

One of the more comical spectacles now on offer is that of Renata Adler claiming harassment by Big Media, in the form of CBS and Time Inc. You'll recall that last June, Adler published two articles in *The New Yorker* concerning the Westmoreland and Sharon libel trials. At least so far as the Westmoreland case is concerned, Adler's articles were of astonishing inaccuracy, particularly in their fierce attacks on the integrity of George Crile and Sam Adams, the two men central to the preparation of the original CBS documentary.

Remember first that in terms of BM throw-weight Adler isn't doing too badly herself. Her articles appeared in a magazine owned by Newhouse and are to be published as a book by Knopf, also owned by Newhouse. Newhouse is one of the largest media conglomerates and is therefore not short of Big Dollars and Big Lawyers to fight its causes.

Thus far Adler's "harassment" by BM has consisted of one letter from CBS to *The New Yorker*, detailing Adler's inaccuracies and requesting that the record be set straight. No legal threats. To this communication *The New Yorker*'s editor, William Shawn, responded, in ecstatic disregard of the obvious, that opinions, not facts, were in contention and therefore no clarification was necessary. On September 30, Crile wrote to S.I. Newhouse Jr. explaining at some length that elementary justice demanded that the record be corrected. Thus far Newhouse has not responded. Knopf's lawyers are scrutinizing the letter from CBS, for such is their function in life. So much for Adler's harassment from parties on the Westmoreland side of the affair. As for *Time*, its editor, Henry Grunwald, sent Shawn a documented rebuttal of Adler's account, requesting that it be published in *The New Yorker*. A distinctly unthreatening communication from *Time*'s legal department accompanied Grunwald's letter.

So what we have here is a well-known author and a powerful magazine stonewalling all efforts from injured individuals and from CBS to set the record straight. *Time* met the same obdurate arrogance. Nonetheless *The New York Times* for October 25 carried a story, concocted on deadline and with no substantiation, containing Adler's charges of harassment. The appearance of the story may have had something to do with Adler's friendship with A.M. Rosenthal and Arthur Gelb. Its timing may have had something to do with an affected and equivocating article in the November issue of *Manhattan, inc.*, but it certainly had to do with a panel on libel held later that same day at the Yale University School of Law. This panel was organized by Owen Fiss, an admirer of Adler's articles, and had as its guests Adler and Edward Jay Epstein, along with the two judges of the relevant cases, Pierre Leval and Abraham Sofaer. The objects of Adler's attacks were not invited to sit on the panel.

In the public discussion George Crile rose in the audience to challenge Adler's assertions and to suggest that in some appropriate venue they debate the issues and the facts. To which Adler took the legally risky position that she saw no need to probe the facts further. On Monday, October 27, William Safire took up Adler's cry of BM harassment and railed against a BM/Lefty alliance, by which he presumably meant this column. This is where the case now rests. The only legal harassing Adler and Newhouse have sustained is from Greg Rushford, a former aide to the House Intelligence Committee who testified for CBS in the trial. Rushford is decidedly not BM.

Does all this matter? Yes it does. Adler's articles and impending book, *Reckless Disregard*, are a continuation of the conservative campaign that prompted Westmoreland to his lawsuit against CBS. The aim of this campaign was to discredit even the miserably feeble attempts of the mainstream media such as CBS to criticize the U.S. government's conduct in Vietnam. Adler's project was to show that CBS told lies about Vietnam. So, looked at from the political point of view, *Reckless Disregard* stands at the same angle to CBS as did the effort of the Jesse Helms crowd to take over the network, with the aim not merely of purifying the U.S. record in Vietnam but of stifling even the most tentative efforts by the press to dissent from official truth.

There Is a Free Lunch

After scores of journalists from around the country accepted free transportation and lodging from the Walt Disney Company to cover a P.R. bash at Disney World, in Florida, *The New York Times* for October 8 thundered its indignation about "debased" free-riders who gave the impression that "the entire Fourth Estate was on the take." This principled opposition to freebies does not appear to extend to the *International Herald Tribune*, in which *The Times* has a one-third interest. On September 30 of this year Lee Huebner, publisher of the *Tribune*, sent the following memorandum to "All Department Heads and Assistant Department Heads," along with "All Editorial Supervisors":

> For those of you who may not have heard, the Belle Epoque party at Maxim's that helped to launch our centennial year last Sunday was given for Hebe Dorsey and the IHT by the owner of Maxim's, Pierre Cardin. We are immensely grateful to him, of course. He does not want this fact to be publicized at all, but I think it is important for our own employees to know about this, especially at this time of consolidation and economy at the IHT. Will you quietly pass the word along?

I reached Huebner in London, where he confirmed he'd written the memo. "It was a little family party, really," he said, adding that the *Tribune* would be paying for other celebrations culminating in October 1987, which is the centennial of the newspaper's Paris publication. In fact the "little family party" involved taking over the whole of Maxim's for a night, in which around 300 upscale revelers capered and ate at Cardin's expense, honoring the *Tribune* and Dorsey, the paper's fashion editor, who is about to published a book about the *belle époque* as seen through the *Tribune*. Cardin's business empire is of course based on his fashion house.

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CALVIN TRILLIN

Most people don't know that the real George Gipp—the George Gipp of "win one for the Gipper" fame, the George Gipp played by Ronald Reagan in *Knute Rockne, All American*—is still alive. That's right.

Yes, I realize that in the movie George Gipp died, so that coach Knute Rockne could invoke the name of the Gipper in the great halftime pep talk that inspired Notre Dame to go out there and wipe up the field with what had been up to then a pretty rugged Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute eleven. But not everything they say in movies is true. That's right. In real life—now that we're being absolutely factual about all of this—Notre Dame lost the game. R.P.I. creamed them. In real life, as a matter of fact, George Gipp only went to Notre Dame because he couldn't get into Holy Cross. That happens to be the truth.

How do I know? Because George Gipp told me. I visit him pretty regularly. He lives in an old-age home in Massapequa, Long Island, these days, and keeps himself in pretty good shape stiff-arming nurses' aides and dying bravely off camera. His memory is absolutely phenomenal, and he's in good spirits, particularly considering the fact that he's had to go through most of his life being assumed dead. As you might imagine, just about every person he has ever been introduced to says something like, "But I thought you were . . . well . . . uh . . . Nice to meet you, Mr. Gipp." Apparently, though, he learned to deal with that a long time ago. He usually just says to the person, rather quietly, "Stick it in your ear, buddy."

He's been particularly cheerful this fall, ever since he started monitoring Ronald Reagan's campaigning for Republican Congressional candidates. Every night, when the network news comes on, George Gipp and some of his friends can be found in the nursing home's television lounge sitting in front of the twenty-six-incher. He's armed with two or three Magic Markers and a large map that shows the Congressional districts of the United States. I happened to be in the lounge several weeks ago, on the evening that a clip of Reagan campaigning for a senatorial candidate in Louisiana showed him saying to a cheering crowd something like, "So this November I want you to win one for Louisiana, win one for your country and, if I may add a personal note, win one for the Gipper."

Mr. Gipp and the other people in the lounge started cheering, and a couple of old gentlemen came up to clap Mr. Gipp on the back. Mr. Gipp, smiling broadly, got out one of the Magic Markers and colored in the entire state of Louisiana. By his count, that made twenty-eight states or Congressional districts in which Ronald Reagan had asked the voters to "win one for the Gipper."

I hated to spoil Mr. Gipp's fun, but I felt I had to ask him if it struck him that the President was being just a tad insincere by saying "win one for the Gipper" in twenty-eight different election campaigns.

"Oh no," he said. "Rockne—the real Rockne—did the same thing. You know, I was pretty sick when he made the original speech—don't let anyone tell you that anything hurts worse than an impacted molar—but I played every game the next year, and every single halftime Rockne said 'win one for the Gipper.' He said it with me sitting right there in the locker room. After a while, some of the players started saying, 'Coach, wasn't the Swarthmore game last week the one you told us we were supposed to win for the Gipper?' Sometimes Rockne would say he couldn't remember ever saying that, and sometimes he would remind us that we had lost the Swarthmore game, not to speak of the Kenyon game and the M.I.T. game, so, in fact, we hadn't really won one for the Gipper yet and it was about time we did."

"Excuse me, Mr. Gipp," I said. "But I didn't realize Notre Dame lost to schools like Swarthmore in those days. I've always seen the Notre Dame team of that era referred to as a football powerhouse."

Mr. Gipp smiled. "That was the spin Rockne put on it," he said. "Swarthmore murdered us. But Rockne was careful never to admit that, except to us in the locker room. After the game, he always told the sportswriters how proud he was of the Fighting Irish. By the next September, he'd be saying that it'd be hard to repeat an undefeated season that had seen us whip teams like Michigan and Ohio State and Army. The sportswriters never seemed to point out that we hadn't played those teams and that the teams we had played, like Haverford and Oberlin, had slaughtered us. He was a charming man, Coach Rockne."

"Oberlin!" I said. "Notre Dame was slaughtered by Oberlin!"

But Mr. Gipp, lost in his recollections, seemed not to hear me. "When I read in the paper that Reagan left the summit in Iceland cussing about his failure and two days later decided it was a big triumph, it really brought back those memories of Coach Rockne," he said. "That's exactly how the coach would have handled it. Yes sir, the President learned all that at Notre Dame."

"But the President didn't really go to Notre Dame," I said. "That was just a movie. You're the one who went to Notre Dame."

"Only because I couldn't get into Holy Cross," he said.

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COMING SOON

Andrew Kopkind on South Africa

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ARTICLES.

LETTER FROM TEXAS

Practicing Nuance Down at Luby's

MOLLY IVINS

Austin

Texans will be voting with their feet on November 4, in what is predicted to be the most poorly attended gubernatorial election on record. None of the Above is the candidate of choice for the great majority of Texans, and who can blame them? The incumbent adds new dimensions to the concept of "unimpressive," and the challenger is the guy we threw out last time we had a chance.

Governor Mark White is in deep sludge, the economy has gone to hell and the state faces a massive budget deficit. While no one except Bill Clements, the once and future governor, blames this on White, the man's peerless imitation of a weather vane has helped spread the impression that he can't go to the bathroom without consulting the polls. According to *The Almanac of American Politics* for 1986, "Mark White is a man with no clear philosophy." I'd say so myself. It's hard to look up to a fellow who always has his ear to the ground. Still, White is guilty mainly of bad luck—he was governor when the price of oil went from $32 a barrel to $9. His chief claim to fame is education reform, a tremendous effort from Texas, under which it was finally agreed that football is not the raison d'être of our public school system. But if Ronald Reagan is the Teflon politician, Mark White is Velcro. Part of the reform package was a competency test for teachers, who like to had a walleyed fit over it and now refuse to vote for White.

Dollar Bill Clements, 69, is one of those people who was born with a burr up his butt. He lost to White in '82 because people thought he was mean, a well-founded impression. His political philosophy is, "If you don't have an oil well, git one." Clements made several units—which is what we used to call a hundred million dollars back when we had money down here—in the "awl bidness," which he considered made him fit to be governor and so did 50 percent of the Texans who voted in 1978. When the largest oil spill in history—caused by a rig from Clements's company—was headed for the Texas Gulf Coast, Governor Clements advised the citizenry, "Pray for a hurricane." When he disagreed with a Mexican scholar on immigration, Clements said, "He's just another Meskin with an opinion." His advice to the unemployed is that they should quit settin' around suckin' their thumbs.

There is a large collection of these sayings from Chairman Clements, many of which are being reprised in Mark White's campaign advertisements. They generally combine ignorance with arrogance, two of Clements's most salient traits, but the man's bluntness can also be endearing. You will notice this in the unlikely event you should ever agree with him. He was once confronted by a fundamentalist at a Republican convention, who demanded to know if Clements had been born again. "No thanks," said Clements, "once was enough." He is running hard on the utterly loony pledge that he will never raise our taxes: we face a $5 billion deficit on an $11 billion budget that was tighter than a tick to begin with. We could elect Jesus governor and he'd still have to raise our taxes. But you know Texans—you can always tell 'em, you just can't tell 'em much.

Clements went through the spring primaries smiling like Dale Carnegie himself. The consultants had told him he had to overcome his "mean problem," so he tried to convince voters that in addition to having a bad hip joint replaced, he'd had a complete personality transplant as well. We thought Bill Clements was running for governor, but all spring we got Mr. Chips. Fortunately, that didn't last long. Clements now goes about nastily accusing White of "practicing nuance."

Among political consultants, when the candidate is a dog the preferred euphemism is, "We don't want to overexpose the candidate." Clements's people are so determined not to overexpose him, they'd like to send him out of state 'til it's over. He sometimes gets to campaign at the Casden's filling station near Wink, and they let him out for an occasional hand-shaking at Luby's in Longview. Meanwhile, he's all over the airwaves, blaming the state's fiscal problems on "Mark White's wild overspending."

Clements and White had one debate. Political debates are sort of like stock races—no one really cares who wins, they just want to see the crashes. If there aren't any crashes, everyone votes the event a total bore. Clements managed not to say anything too outrageous, just the normal political lies, and then trotted out his patented pore-boy routine. "I started out just a pore boy . . . " When Clements was governor, *The New York Times* kept describing him as "a brash, self-made veteran of the oilfields." What nuance. Bill Clements grew up in Highland Park, the wealthiest suburb of Dallas; he went to Highland Park High School and then Southern Methodist University, where he pledged Kappa Alpha. He did work as a roughneck: a lot of college kids still do, or at least they did until last November.

Clements started this race twenty points ahead of White last spring. By mid-September, White had pulled almost even. But the most recent polls show Clements's lead holding, and most of us think he has the edge. In a small-turnout election, almost anything could swing it. Facing the oil crash and four more years of Bill Clements would have been enough to depress Hubert Humphrey. But Clements, although a miserable governor, makes a wonderful target. When told Clements had been studying Spanish, Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower was moved to comment, "Oh good. Now he'll be bilingnorant."

Molly Ivins is a columnist for the Dallas Times Herald.

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We are having an equally swell time with the lesser races. The Republicans are quite taken with themselves for having nominated an actual Hispanic for statewide office. Roy Barrera Jr., Republican candidate for Attorney General, is the son of one of John Connally's old henchmen and is thus fated to stalk through life known to all as Roy Junior. He accuses the incumbent, Jim Mattox, of having brought "disgrace, fiscal irresponsibility and scandal to the office." But Roy Junior says he's not mudslinging: "It's very appropriate for candidates to bring out the facts." And it is a fact that Attorney General Mattox got himself indicted for commercial bribery while in office—also acquitted.

But Roy Junior is just piddling when it comes to Mattox-bashing. The man you want for that purpose is the Rev. W.N. Otwell, who says that Mattox is ungodly, a tyrant, homosexual, a communist and a wicked man who does not love God.

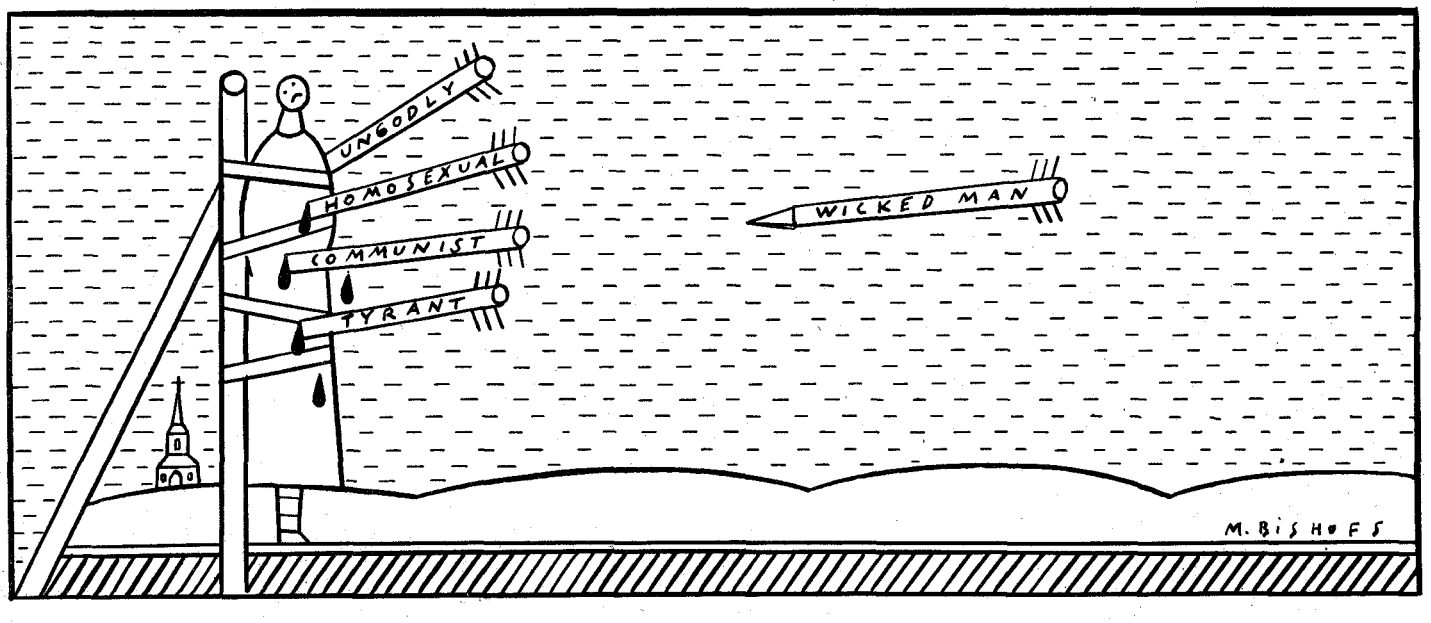
Of course, the Reverend Otwell calls everyone who doesn't agree with him a communist, homosexual God-hater, so it's not that much of an honor. Actually, Mattox is a full-blooded Southern Baptist. Otwell is mad because the Attorney General is trying to shut down his home for wayward boys. The General is trying to shut it down because it doesn't meet the state's licensing requirements. The reverend claims that's a violation of church and state and also Satan at work. Right now Otwell is on the lam, ducking the law, a fugitive; but he appears at press conferences. Via videotape. Wearing burlap sackcloth. And answers questions on a speaker-phone. Just another one of those episodes that add such *je ne sais quoi* to life in the Greatest State. Otwell ankled on out of Fort Worth to avoid a court appearance at which the state was set to close down the home for troubled youth. He said, "God didn't tell me to go to jail," which is probably true, but getting the Lord to sign off these things is damned complicated.

Perhaps you wonder why the state of Texas is persecuting a dippy preacher. Goes back to the early 1970s, when the state simply failed to enforce its licensing requirements for private schools. This legal lacuna led to the growth of a Dickensian industry; all manner of persons set up "homes" for delinquent youth. Delinquents from other states were regularly consigned to Texas—the reformatories in places like Illinois were overcrowded and their authorities saved money by shipping the little darlings here. An early example of the beauty of privatization. The homes advertised they could reform delinquents. To that end, many innovative instructional techniques were brought to bear on the wayward children, such as putting them in cages, dousing them with ice water and making them scrub themselves with wire brushes. In November 1972, a 14-year-old girl at Artesia Hall, a school in Liberty County, was forced to swallow lye and left without medical care for three days. It probably would have reformed her if she hadn't died instead.

This caused some stink, so the state took to inspecting and licensing those schools and homes, over the objections of the fundamentalists, which continue to this day.

The Land Commissioner is in a tight race against a hospital. Garry Mauro, the commissioner, has a Republican opponent named M.D. Anderson, which also happens to be a fine cancer hospital in Houston. The M.D. Anderson on the ballot is a bartender from Seven Points and no kin to the guy who founded the hospital, but such details seldom trouble our Texas voters, a carefree lot. Mauro is running very scared.

An avalanche of apathy is the safest bet for election day. Students of politics from around the country keep wanting to know what the Texas election portends, being as the oil patch is in big trouble. Who will we blame for this mess—the Republicans in Washington or the Democrats in Austin? What will it mean? Does a victory for Clements signal continuing realignment in the South? Does it mean Reagan still has coattails? Or will a White win prove that moderate Democrats shall inherit the earth? Do yourselves a favor, friends, and seek no straws in the wind from Texas. If folks down here can bring themselves to vote at all, it'll be by holding their noses and pushing the lever against the candidate they can't stand the most. □



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MEXICO'S POLITICAL MACHINE

Playing With Loaded Dice

WILLIAM A. ORME JR.

Mexico City

In a country where the central government and the ruling party—the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI)—are synonymous, a PRI veteran's despairing analysis said a lot about Mexico's troubles: "It's simple," he explained. "The country's screwed up, the party's screwed up, and it's the government that did the screwing."

Mexico's debt crisis, now in its fifth year, has left the PRI in worse shape than at any time in its fifty-seven-year history. The PRI was battered further by the earthquake that occurred here on September 19, 1985, when the government seemed to be deliberately minimizing the extent of the disaster. Since then, rare public appearances in the capital by President Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado have provoked lusty heckling, a startling shift from the near-reverential receptions traditionally accorded Mexican presidents. For the first time in decades the PRI faces serious challenges at the polls, which have forced it to maintain its monolithic hold on public office with embarrassingly messy frauds.

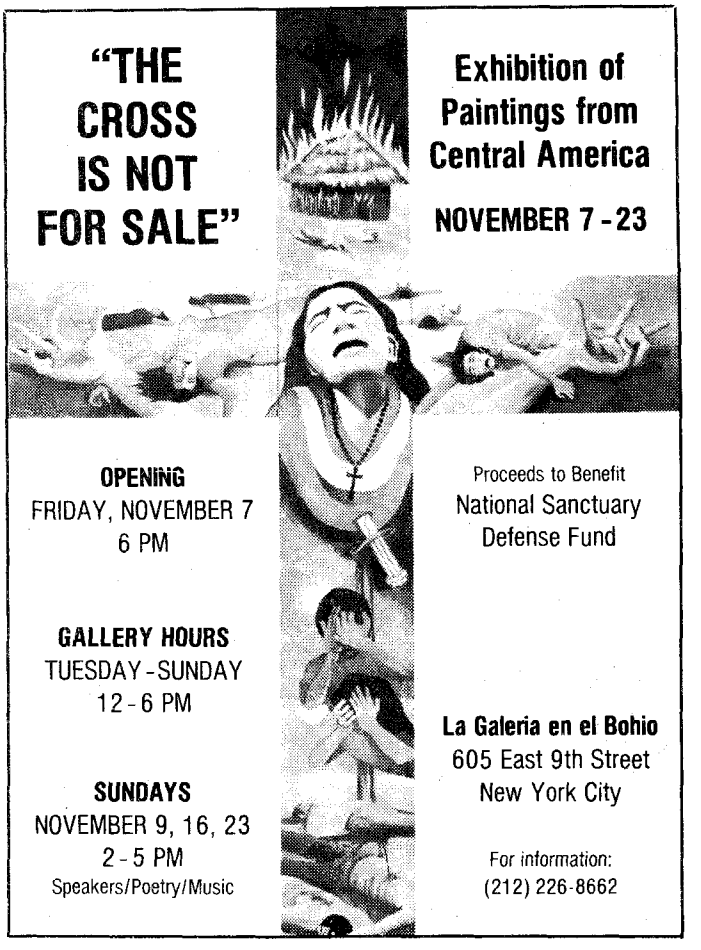
Internally, the party is riven by bitter splits between alienated old-line politicians and the foreign-trained economists who now dominate the government. A system famous for reconciling political extremes has alienated the left by punctually paying foreign bankers while slashing wages at home; the right, meanwhile, is incensed by the government's unshaken faith in central planning and its attacks on conservative opponents as traitorous counterrevolutionaries.

As Mexico's 1988 presidential election season approaches, the struggle for power and the soul of the PRI is becoming unusually visible. Monitoring the spectacle is a new U.S. crew of Mexico-watchers, mostly from the Republican right, who point with alarm to a wave of protests, accelerating emigration and multibillion-dollar capital flight. Equating the PRI's massive bureaucracy with the family dictatorships toppled in Nicaragua, Haiti and the Philippines, some have concluded that the system will soon collapse into chaos, with class warfare paralyzing the cities as mobs of jobless ford the Rio Grande.

The Mexican government often seems to encourage such apocalyptic speculation. Only last month, de la Madrid declared that Mexico faced a choice between the PRI and "anarchy." Yet the Mexican economic crisis has neither sparked food riots nor rekindled support for armed rebellion, even though guerrillas roamed the mountains above Acapulco barely a decade ago. Instead, most dissent has

William A. Orme Jr. reports from Mexico City for The Economist *and* The Washington Post.

"THE CROSS IS NOT FOR SALE"



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The Nation, September 13, 1986

THE RISE AND DECLINE OF ACCURACY IN MEDIA

Michael Massing reports on how AIM has affected the practice of print and TV journalists and concludes that AIM is a paper tiger.

Alan Wolfe reflects on AIM's agenda and argues that it is more concerned with promoting right-wing ideology than with accuracy (or indeed with media).

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taken the form of angry but peaceful protests against vote-rigging. Even opponents who believe the PRI will not survive this century tend to foresee a transition based on civil resistance and the ballot box. In the short term, few doubt that the PRI will prevail; though weakened and defensive, it still commands vast resources and widespread loyalty. Anti-government politicians readily concede that the party's 1988 presidential candidate will be elected with a comfortable plurality and a minimum of violent opposition.

The central question for most Mexican analysts is not whether the PRI will collapse but rather how it will adapt to a shrinking power base. As historian Gabriel Zaid has said, the PRI has traditionally governed in the name of the people, but not necessarily with their consent. This attitude was widely tolerated, however, as the PRI absorbed and tamed what might otherwise have been warring sectors of postrevolutionary Mexico: a militant labor movement, a conservative (though anticlerical) army, a land-hungry peasantry and a powerful, privileged business class.

Political agility helped, but the key to this balancing act was economic growth. Until de la Madrid, who took office at the end of 1982, every Mexican president since World War II could boast an average annual economic growth rate of 6 percent or better—a record unsurpassed among large developing nations. During de la Madrid's administration, however, Mexico's economy has actually contracted; industrial growth stopped and the average wage earner's purchasing power fell by a third while the country paid some $40 billion in interest to foreign banks. The right and left opposition, in rare agreement, complain that the government caved in to creditors in its latest loan deal, borrowing another $12 billion and failing to obtain substantive repayment concessions—something veteran PRI politicians describe as the final failure of de la Madrid's technocrats.

Now the defection of middle-class professionals, discontent in the countryside and an emboldened electoral opposition are forcing the PRI to choose between rigid authoritarianism and the riskier option of a more open democracy. Some PRI-istas believe the party would be strengthened if it abandoned the pretense of representing all Mexicans, defined itself more narrowly as a social democratic party and granted the opposition a minor but genuine quota of power. After all, the PRI would appear to have power to spare: aside from its control of the near-monarchical presidency, it holds all thirty-two state governorships, every Senate seat, all but a handful of municipal councils and 289 of the 400 seats in the Chamber of Deputies (one hundred seats are automatically allotted to minority parties under a proportional representation system). Academic analysts estimate that clean elections over the past three years would have given opposition parties control of at most a dozen more cities, another thirty or forty congressional districts and, possibly, a pair of statehouses. Honest elections might hurt the PRI's aura of invulnerability but would only slightly diminish its power.

Party instinct and tradition, though, point toward increasing authoritarianism. Intolerance of opponents has intensified with the economic crisis. PRI operatives privately defend electoral fraud by saying the opposition has "unfairly taken advantage" of Mexico's financial troubles; voters who opt for alternatives are simply casting protest ballots, they explain, and never intended to endorse opposition programs. In 1983, the right-wing National Action Party (PAN) stunned the regime with a chain of solid mayoral wins in major northern cities; since then, nearly all those victories have been reversed in elections rife with voter intimidation, ballot-stuffing and artful revisions of electoral rolls. "We are doing these people a favor," one PRI official said, indirectly acknowledging fraud in July's Chihuahua gubernatorial race, the most recent PRI–PAN confrontation. "If they knew what the PAN really stood for, they wouldn't vote for them."

Senior PRI members also justify electoral fraud by claiming it is used only to pad genuine majorities. In Chihuahua, a veteran PRI legislator confided over drinks, if the government "had won only narrowly, everyone would have thought that we really lost, and the truth is that we really won."

In response to the PAN's rising strength in the north, the PRI to some extent pursued its traditional practice of co-opting critics. To assuage the conservatives, the PRI in Chihuahua secured the support of the state's two leading businessmen and fielded a gubernatorial candidate who stressed his faith in free enterprise and Catholicism. But there is no prospect that the PRI will try to placate provincial critics by inviting prominent northerners into the ranks of presidential contenders. The small group of 1988 *presidenciables* is disturbing evidence of the PRI's closing circle. All three leading candidates—Energy Minister Alfredo del Mazo, Internal Affairs Minister Manuel Bartlett and Budget Minister Carlos Salinas de Gortari—are sons of former PRI governors or cabinet ministers, career Mexico City bureaucrats and close associates of de la Madrid.

Should de la Madrid impose a candidate unpopular with party regulars, some PRI factions will press more strenuously for internal reform. In small towns, the rank and file is already being given a greater voice in candidate selection; higher-level dissidents are demanding a say in platform drafting and a shake-up of the ossified senior leadership. Jorge G. Castañeda, a Mexican scholar who is one of the system's most astute observers, predicts that this trend toward greater inner-party democracy will intensify, making de la Madrid the last president free to designate his successor.

Some leaders also see party reform as an alternative to opening doors to the opposition. Multiparty democracy is alien to Mexico, they argue, given the country's long history of centralized authoritarian rule. Nor, they contend, can regionally based, philosophically antagonistic opposition movements realistically aspire to national power. Government strategists talk confidently about undercutting the right's private-sector support with pro-business economic reforms and of revitalizing the PRI's rural base with higher farm prices and younger, more attractive candidates. The Mexico City left, it is assumed, will remain ineffectual, bought off by congressional salaries and national university posts, and preoccupied by its opposition to business and

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U.S. foreign policy. More recalcitrant leftists are repressed by spurious arrests and occasional assassinations.

But the opposition is not about to be negotiated out of existence. The PAN, an amateurish mix of right-wing businessmen and nonideological middle-class reformers, is reaching out to the urban poor to build a de facto two-party system in the industrialized north, as well as cultivating a more populist image on such key issues as the foreign debt. Unpublished government opinion surveys of border youths show that PAN support is now strongest among the lowest-income groups. In much of the rural south, a unified left could theoretically have similar success. And in Mexico City, with more than a fifth of the country's population, the most recent official election tallies give the combined opposition a clear majority.

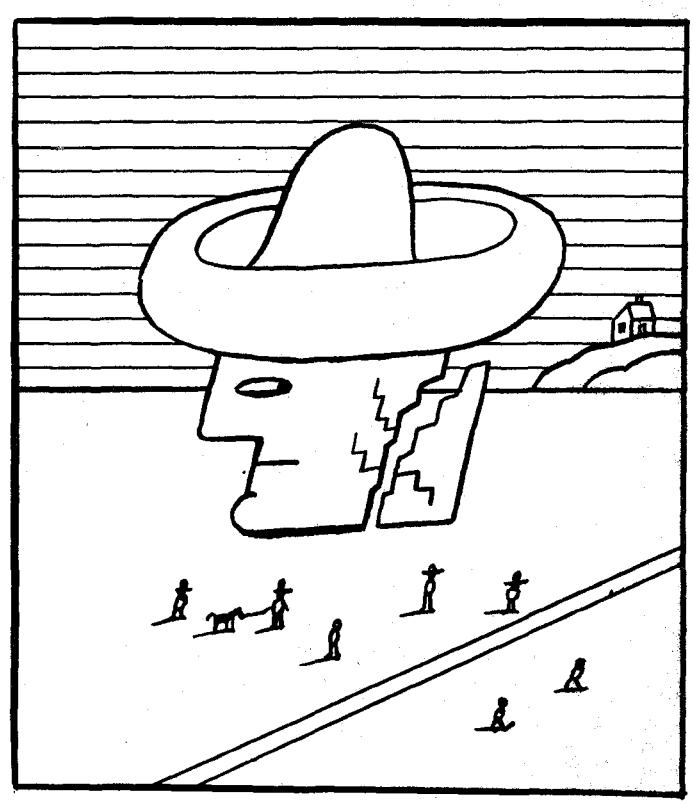
The anti-government vote in the capital is split between the right and left, and the country's other pockets of opposition strength have few common denominators. Yet there are significant points of convergence. In both the north and south, the PRI's rivals enjoy the increasingly open support of local bishops—an important advantage in a nation that though officially anticlerical, remains overwhelmingly Catholic. The left, meanwhile, has made common cause with the right's demand for honest elections, overcoming fierce internal objections to alliances with "fascists."

For years, the Mexican left has been dismissed as irrelevant, mired in internecine quarreling and incapable of cultivating a grass-roots base. Certainly, as leftist candidates have learned, it is hazardous to favor greater state control of the economy in a country where this has created scandalous inefficiency and corruption. But the left's isolation could be broken. In Congress, the left opposition is represented by three small parties: the Trotskyist, human rights-oriented Workers' Revolutionary Party (P.R.T.); the non-Marxist Mexican Workers' Party (P.M.T.); and the Mexican Unified Socialist Party (PSUM), whose core is the now-dissolved Communist Party. The last two are now considering a merger which, if P.M.T. founder Heberto Castillo has his way, will get rid of the PSUM's counterproductive hammer-and-sickle symbol and explicitly "commit itself to pluralism." The new party would court militant peasant and slum-dweller groups that have kept aloof from electoral politics, while making a pitch for disaffected professionals. "The left must make it clear that it does not want for Mexico the kind of socialism that is found in Cuba, the Soviet Union or China," Castillo stressed in a recent conversation. "Personally, I'm against one-party states in all countries. If I lived in Cuba, I would be in jail."

While the left is more fragmented than the conservative opposition in the north, its potential for penetrating the PRI's labor and peasant base makes it in some ways more dangerous. Rhetorically, the PRI is far more comfortable confronting the right—it is hard to hang the *contra* tag on Marxist union militants and Indian community activists. By contrast, the PAN is ideologically allied with revolutionary Mexico's official enemies—the church, private wealth and, most critically, the United States. The sight of Jesse Helms warmly receiving PAN activists allowed PRI militants to defend their "patriotic" fraud openly in Chihuahua.

Party officials shrug off electoral irregularities as one of the "idiosyncracies" of Mexico's "guided" or "majoritarian" democracy. But brazen vote-rigging has left the north dangerously polarized, radicalizing an essentially middle-class opposition. Demonstrations protesting fraud in Chihuahua this year and in Nuevo León last year were the largest antigovernment rallies ever held outside Mexico City, and support is building for more aggressive civil disobedience. Internationally, dishonest elections make Mexico more vulnerable to attacks from the U.S. right and embarrass a government that through the Contadora peace process urges democracy for its Latin neighbors.

After the Chihuahua elections in July, a group of prominent, politically diverse intellectuals warned that electoral fraud was undermining the government's legitimacy. Enrique Krauze, an editor and historian who has emerged as the group's leading spokesman, sees Mexico's political and economic crisis as a historic "plastic moment" that enlightened PRI leaders could use to turn Mexico toward Western pluralism, while leaving the governing party comfortably occupying the broad political left-center. Mexico is ready "for a democracy without adjectives," Krauze argues in his new book of that title, which is being read widely and seriously in governing circles. But that kind of transformation would erode the PRI's monopoly on patronage and require a more independent judiciary and legislature—changes resisted by a system built around an overwhelmingly dominant presidency. For at least another presidential term, the odds are that Mexican democracy will be subject to still more critical modifiers, as leaders lacking popular support struggle to revive a moribund economy and to defang an increasingly aggressive opposition. The PRI



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K.A.L. 007: What the U.S. Knew And When We Knew It

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K.A.L. 007: Unanswered Questions

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monolith is not about to crumble, but its refusal to share power is widening the fissures left by Mexico's financial and natural disasters. □

COPING WITH THE '80s

A New Kind of War for the U.M.W.

NICOLAUS MILLS

How does a union remain militant yet cope with the political realities of the 1980s? In recent years no union offers a better example than the United Mine Workers under Richard Trumka. In view of the union's history, it makes sense that the mine workers' first instinct would be to resist accommodation. But what makes their story so impressive is that the U.M.W. that Trumka, a 36-year-old lawyer and former miner, took over in 1982 is a far cry in size and power from the 595,000-member union that John L. Lewis once led. The U.M.W.'s active membership has been reduced to 155,000, with 45,000 of those unemployed. They have little prospect of getting their jobs back so long as the decline of smokestack industries in the United States and the worldwide glut of cheap fuel continues. Even in its traditional strongholds the U.M.W. faces trouble. In West Virginia, where coal mining accounted for more than 22 percent of all employment in the industry's heyday, before 1955, it is now 6 percent and falling.

"Why Not the Best?" was Trumka's slogan when he defeated incumbent Sam Church by 45,566 votes. Early in the 1980s the U.M.W. was in bad shape. To get contract settlements, the union had given away vital health and safety protections during the late 1970s, and it seemed likely that the coal companies would be after more concessions when negotiations came around again. To make matters worse, when Trumka took office the international union had an overall debt of $4.6 million, and each month it was spending $500,000 more than it took in.

Trumka and newly elected secretary-treasurer John Banovic immediately set about putting the international's house in order. They eliminated more than one hundred staff positions, cut operating expenses by 28 percent, froze the wages of U.M.W. officers and staff members and sold union property to pay off loans that were costing $750,000 a year in interest. In addition, they upgraded the U.M.W.'s investment portfolio so that its stocks would generate more income. (Its investment in the National Bank of Washington, for example, was yielding a 1.8 percent annual return.)

Internal changes were designed not only to improve effi-

Nicolaus Mills is at work on a book about the Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964. This fall Louisiana State University Press will publish his critical study, The Crowd in American Literature.

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ciency but to transform the mood in the U.M.W., to make the union much more formidable when it came time to negotiate. Trumka made sure that miners, not outside consultants, would be responsible for decisions on day-to-day matters as well as long-term policy. Now, except for the legal staff, all department heads and their assistants are former miners.

The key to Trumka's 1982 campaign, however, was the promise that under his leadership there would be "no backward steps, no takeaway contracts." It was a bold statement to make one year after President Reagan fired 11,400 air-traffic controllers, and at a time when union after union was agreeing to concessionary contracts. For Trumka, fulfilling that campaign pledge meant coming to the 1984 Bituminous Coal Operators Association (B.C.O.A.) negotiations with a strike fund that would allow the U.M.W. to hold out as long as needed. From then on, selective strikes against targeted companies rather than an industrywide general strike would be the U.M.W.'s principal weapon.

The strategy has paid handsome dividends to the union. The first one came in 1984, when the B.C.O.A., which has invariably gone into negotiations with huge coal stockpiles, found the U.M.W. sitting on a $45 million strike fund, accumulated by assessing both its rank and file and its officers 2.5 percent of their salaries. The result was the first B.C.O.A. contract in twenty years that was negotiated without a strike. It raised the membership's wages by more than 10 percent, increased safety in the mines and placed stricter limits on subcontracting by B.C.O.A. producers.

The second dividend came last year, when the union concluded a successful fifteen-month strike (the final settlement is still being adjudicated in court) against A.T. Massey Coal Company, the nation's sixth largest coal producer [see Mills, "A Victory for Miners' Rights," *The Nation*, February 15]. A strike fund that amounted to $70 million before the battle with Massey ended enabled the U.M.W. to give its members $200 a week in strike wages, pay for their medical insurance and weather a series of court injunctions. Above all, the strikers could hold out until the National Labor Relations Board affirmed their claim that Massey was guilty of unfair labor practices.

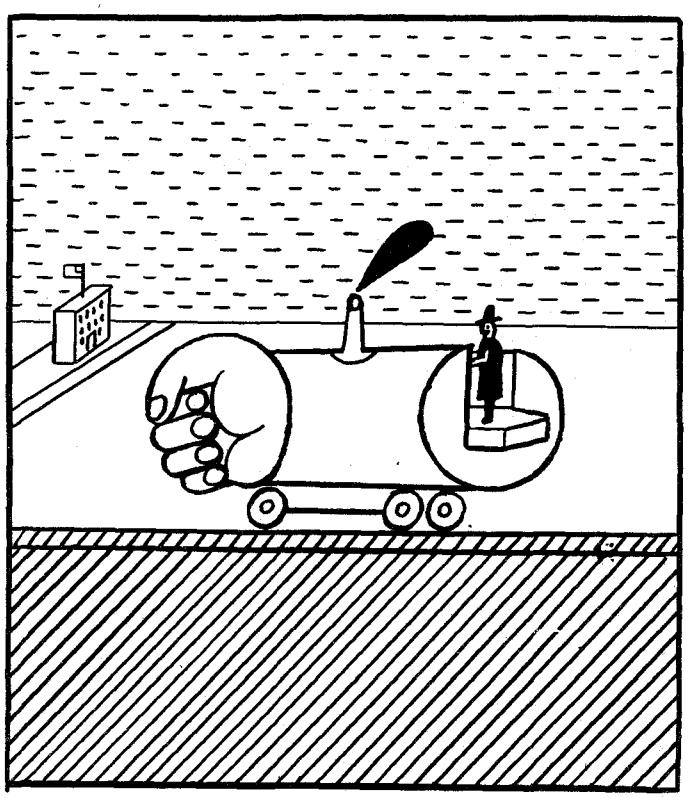
The B.C.O.A. agreement and the Massey strike were only the first steps toward reviving the U.M.W.'s fortunes. From the start of his administration Trumka recognized that getting even a fraction of the U.M.W.'s unemployed miners back to work depends on forces beyond the coal fields. As Trumka told the first U.M.W. constitutional convention he addressed after taking office: "The decisions resulting in massive numbers of coal miners being unemployed were political. In order to change the way things are, those political decisions must be reversed."

Trumka maintains there is no need to accept as inevitable "the deliberate deindustrialization" of the economy, and he is convinced that it is possible for unions such as the U.M.W. to help change the way the public sees U.S. industrial policy. For this reason he has become a spokesman for a new economics.

The country does not have to watch passively as unemployment grows and low-wage service jobs replace high-paying industrial work, Trumka argues. His critique of Reaganomics and deindustrialization includes a blistering analysis of the behavior of multinational corporations, which do not, he says, act in the country's best interests. "When it has been profitable for these corporations to invest overseas to take advantage of cheap wages or to spend billions on nonproductive mergers and acquisitions, then that has taken precedence over maintaining America's economic health and competitiveness here at home." Even worse, Trumka contends, the multinationals have been allowed to avoid the consequences of their actions. They have not had to compensate the impoverished communities and unemployed workers they have left behind.

Trumka says the new "corporate radicals," not unions, are responsible for the labor wars of the 1980s, and their interests conflict with basic American values. "It undermines our democracy when a tiny elite [of corporate heads] is able to make decisions that are devastating to our economy and our people."

As an example of what's wrong, Trumka points to the massive Cerrejon Mine being built in Colombia with financing from the Export-Import Bank and a subsidiary of Exxon. The mine's output will compete with U.S. coal in both foreign and domestic markets. The remedy, Trumka insists, is regulation of the multinationals. Federal laws should not only require companies that are closing down to give adequate notification and severance pay; they should also provide for community and labor involvement in the company's decision. Most important, the U.S. government, like that of other countries, must help industries that are in trouble. Tariffs must be structured to insure that imported goods are not cheaper simply because they come from a



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country that allows slave wages or forbids unions. U.S. rail facilities and deep-water ports must be improved, and technology and resources must be used to benefit the economy.

Few union officials are so clear on what it will take politically to reverse America's industrial decline. Trumka is particularly compelling, however, because his argument for reindustrialization is not reducible to a plea bargaining for special interests or a replay of the philosophy behind the programs of the Great Society. An expanded welfare state is not at the center of his thinking. Rather, he wants to see an economy that functions so well that the state does not have to take on the responsibility of supporting unemployed citizens. Trumka focuses on what society owes to working people, not on what a charitable government might do for them.

Trumka calls for a "new patriotism" based on people rather than profiteering. Just as he sees the heads of the multinationals as a tiny, undemocratic elite, so he sees the changes that would protect American workers' wages as a benefit for the country as a whole. In this context he speaks of national security and the sacrifices that have been made during wartime. "We cannot expect to insure our freedom and promote peace throughout the world if our industrial heartland is allowed to wither and die," Trumka told the House Committee on Education and Labor. In the same vein he reminded an A.F.L.-C.I.O. convention that unions had every reason to expect the government to help them during their time of need. "How many American coal miners and steelworkers have fought in Korea at our government's request, only to lose their jobs because of the importation of Korean steel? How many Americans fought in Vietnam at our government's request, only to find themselves now with no useful function in our society? We think it is about time that the act of protection became a two-way street," said Trumka, who has opposed costly defense spending as a way of reviving the economy.

In the U.M.W.'s battles with individual corporations, Trumka has been particularly effective as he attacks the other side for failing to uphold the values by which society is supposed to be governed. When the president of A.T. Massey declared, "Multinational corporations do not have a great deal of national loyalty and even less loyalty to southern West Virginia," and then announced that Massey engineers would be helping to design a coal mine in central China, the U.M.W. immediately put the company on the defensive by reprinting its announcement in a full-page advertisement of its own that concluded, "It's time Massey owners showed some loyalty to the people who make their profits possible." Last summer, during Senate Judiciary Committee hearings in Cleveland on the bankruptcy of the LTV Corporation, the union again took the offensive. Trumka called the company's attempt to cut off the health benefits of U.M.W. workers who had retired from two LTV coal mines a "corporate mugging."

The U.M.W.'s stance on Massey and LTV were an indication that it believes unions can change public opinion on key national issues. It is working closely with other trade unions on a series of problems that go beyond its constituency. The U.M.W. has been one of the principal supporters of TransAfrica, the lobby that seeks to influence U.S. policy on South Africa; and along with United Automobile Workers president Owen Bieber, Trumka has been pushing the national boycott of Shell Oil Company to stop that company from doing business in South Africa. The U.M.W. has also become a sponsor of Jeff Faux's progressive think tank, the Economic Policy Institute.

For a union that in this century has lost more than 100,000 of its rank and file to mining accidents, the fight against the multinationals is a new kind of war, and Trumka has been criticized for fighting it. Some observers think the union should be putting more of its resources into organizing Western mines. Others think it should not be relying on the courts to uphold its claim that Massey is still acting illegally when it refuses to hire back workers it claims engaged in strike violence.

But the U.M.W. is showing that in the 1980s labor must take the war of ideas over the country's industrial future as seriously as its own contract wars. The union, which has traditionally supplied the shock troops of the American labor movement, is setting a crucial example for other unions. Equally important, it is setting a crucial example for the American left. For it is doing something that the left hasn't managed to do since it lost power in the late 1960s—link progressive politics to the traditional values held by middle- and working-class Americans. □

Arms and Dems

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

their Republican challengers to the requirements of national defense, both Hart and the D.P.C. assert that a newly invigorated Democratic leadership is now prepared to hone America's war machine for current military contingencies. It is the Democratic Party, Aspin told a D.P.C. convocation in April, that can best serve as "the guardian of peace and freedom in the world." However, because it is widely perceived as the "anti" party (anti-defense, anti-MX, anti-nuclear, anti-*contra*), Democratic hopefuls believe they must present some military initiatives. For too long, Aspin explained last year, Democrats have been "the Doctor No of the defense debate. If we want to make defense policy in the White House, then we had better stand *for* something."

But being for something means being for things that the Democrats introduce. As articulated by Aspin, Democrats "need to go for something that the other side is against."

This perceived need to find things in the military area that the Democrats can take credit for has ruled party thinking on national security since the Reagan landslide in 1984. Leading this search are: Senator Hart, a contender for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1984 and a likely presidential aspirant in 1988; Representative Aspin, chair of the House Armed Services Committee and a possible choice

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for Secretary of Defense in any future Democratic administration; Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia, the ranking minority member of the Senate Armed Services Committee; and Representative Stephen Solarz of New York, an influential member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and chair of the D.P.C.'s Task Force on Foreign Policy.

Given the Democrats' desire to overcome their image of being soft on national security, it is hardly surprising that they should reiterate some of the anti-Soviet rhetoric of the Reagan Administration. What is startling is the intensity of the Democratic assault. "Democrats need to recognize that Soviet repression and Communist tyranny are not a distant memory but a living nightmare," Representative Solarz avowed last year. "It is a nightmare in the valleys of Afghanistan . . . in the jungles of Southeast Asia . . . in the prisons and labor camps of the Soviet Union . . . [and] in the streets of Poland." Similar images are conjured up in the D.P.C. report, which finds that "the Soviet Union poses the greatest threat to world peace and freedom."

The new Democratic pragmatists go on to call for an invigorated U.S. effort to combat Soviet expansionism. "A resolute anti-Communist policy for the Democrats," Solarz explains, "requires more than simply denouncing Communist tyranny. It means, for a start, being just as vigorous in advocating legitimate defense spending as we are in denouncing Pentagon waste." He says that also means strengthening U.S. nuclear deterrent capabilities and pursuing research and development (if not deployment) of the so-called Star Wars technology. And "it means resisting Communist expansionism in the Third World by providing arms and aid to non-Communist forces, such as those in Afghanistan and Cambodia, resisting Communist invasion and occupation of their countries." (While Democrats have endorsed the idea of supporting anti-Communist guerrillas in general, many of them, including Gary Hart, voted against aid to the *contras*.) This combative stance underlies the rest of the party's new security policy.

In the area of nuclear weapons, the party has followed Aspin's advice by stressing the weapons it is for rather than deriding those it is against. Suggesting that "the overriding goal of our nuclear policy must be to maintain a credible and stable deterrent that reduces the likelihood of nuclear war," the D.P.C. calls for the strengthening of second-strike forces. Arms control is mentioned as a goal of U.S. policy, but the emphasis is clearly on the acquisition of new nuclear systems.

Aspin is now leading a Democratic crusade to acquire the single-warhead Midgetman missile. He contends that the "window of vulnerability" touted in the Republicans' 1980 campaign does exist. "While our submarines and bombers can survive a theoretical first strike," Aspin told the D.P.C. this year, "our missile forces were vulnerable to a Soviet attack by a relatively small portion of the Soviet arsenal." But while other analysts have concluded that the solution to this problem is to place all of our deterrent force on bombers and submarines, Aspin's answer is a small, light, mobile ICBM (the Midgetman) that could not be easily targeted by Soviet missiles and thus would not invite pre-emption. Without the Midgetman, he declared, "there is scarce hope that the window of vulnerability problem will be solved."

A similar logic undergirds the Democrats' support for the Trident D-5 submarine-launched missile and the radar-evading "Stealth" bomber. Despite assertions by many arms control experts that these weapons (especially the multiple-warhead D-5) could be used in a first strike, the D.P.C. avers that it is second-strike weaponry whose deployment would enhance strategic nuclear stability. "Taken together, these systems send the unmistakable message to the Soviets that we will never have to use nuclear weapons first . . . and that even after absorbing a first strike, we can retaliate in kind," it maintains.

The Democrats reserve their greatest enthusiasm for new conventional weapons, especially those that would be employed in an all-out war in Europe. A strengthened conventional defense, the Democrats say, requires efficient, reliable weapons that will not break down in the demanding environment of modern warfare and sufficient quantities of such weapons (and associated fuel and ammunition) to fight for an extended period. *New Choices* states, "Democrats believe that we must *focus on effectiveness*—to make sure our conventional forces are reliable, maintainable, and affordable."

Hart, Aspin and the D.P.C. charge the Administration with a preference for "exotic" high-cost weapons, and the claim that the Reagan-sponsored buildup of the past si years has produced shrinking arsenals of complex and ur reliable arms. According to *New Choices*, "Having spe more than a trillion dollars, the Republican administratio has still failed to sufficiently restore America's convention forces."

The Democratic alternative, according to the D.P.C., "defense that works"—rugged, reliable weapons built wi the fighting man in mind. Conceptualization of such wea ons is the particular specialty of Senator Hart, who devo some 150 pages of *America Can Win* to denunciations of isting Pentagon systems and his proposals for more effici substitutes. He advocates procurement of: a less costly, l sophisticated substitute for the M-1 Abrams tank; a lig weight fighter plane that relies on superior maneuverabi rather than costly electronics to defeat Soviet fighters; an small, conventionally powered aircraft carrier equip with vertical-takeoff planes like Britain's Harrier jump-

Hart argues that "effective weapons are generally sn and hard to see, easy to operate and maintain under com conditions, reliable, quick to achieve kills, and affordable large numbers." Unfortunately, he chides, the Pentagon committed to a procurement process that rewards comple ty rather than effectiveness. A key objective of the Dem crats' new defense policy, therefore, must be to revamp th Pentagon's acquisition process.

This reform would also help fulfill another major obje tive of the Democrats' new policy: the expansion of arm and ammunition stockpiles, or what is referred to as the sus tainability of U.S. forces. Improved sustainability is essen tial, the D.P.C. suggests, because it would allow U.S. force

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in Europe to fight longer at the nonnuclear level before having to decide to escalate to the nuclear arena. "As it is, NATO forces have only enough supplies, ammunition, and equipment to fight a conventional war against a Soviet invasion for an estimated 14 days before facing a choice between surrender or resort to [first use of] tactical nuclear weapons," *New Choices* notes. "For Democrats, this shrinking circle of choice is unacceptable." While this argument appears to make some sense when applied to Europe, a major expansion in U.S. combat stocks would also facilitate intervention in Central America or somewhere else in the Third World.

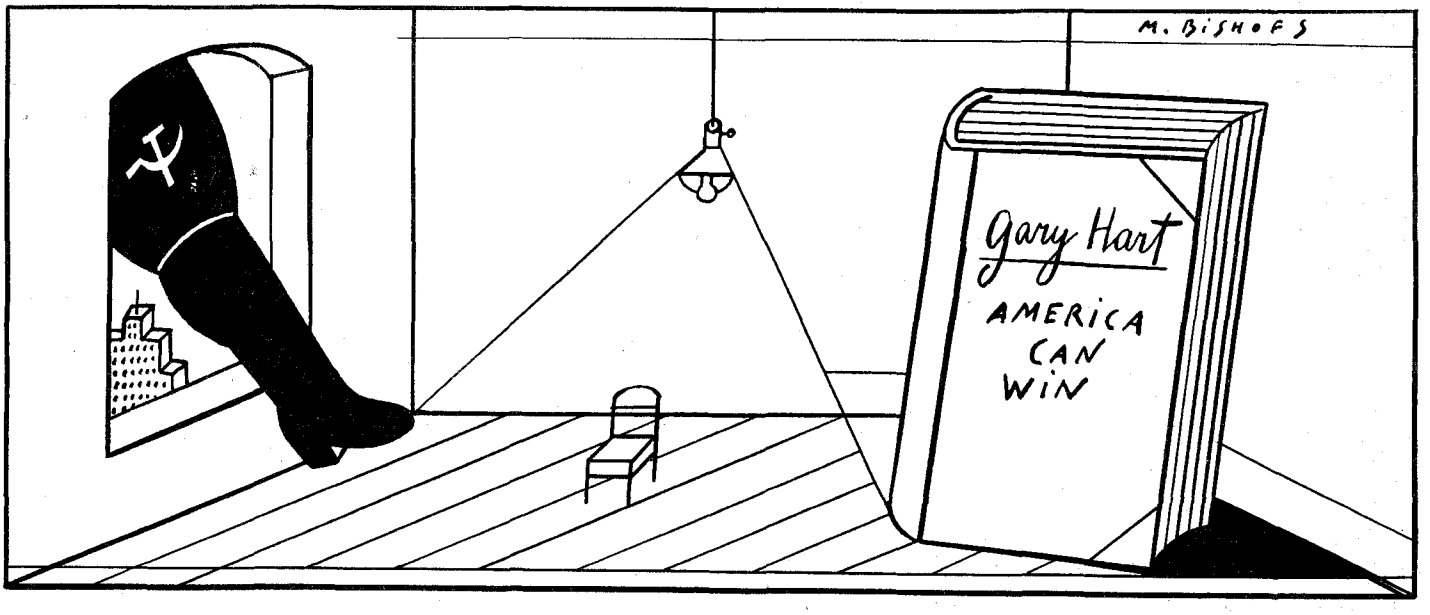
Indeed, the most salient feature of the Democratic tack is its preoccupation with the war-fighting capacity of the U.S. military establishment—its potential performance on the battlefield—rather than on such traditional peacetime concerns as organizational configuration and budgetary allocations. While the Reagan Administration, via Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, has implied that we may never have to go to war if we are prepared to spend enough on new weapons, the Democrats seem to be saying we may have to fight, and we had better be prepared to do it effectively. Hence Hart's curious title, *America Can Win*—as if we were about to go to war, and there were some doubt as to the outcome. A similar outlook haunts the D.P.C. perspective on national security. "Although we hope armed conflict is not required to defend peace and preserve freedom," its report affirms, "we will use our military power if it becomes necessary."

Only by recognizing this preoccupation with the fighting readiness of U.S. forces can we appreciate the significance of the Democrats' fourth major military objective, institutional reform. The combat efficiency of U.S. forces is diminished, Hart and Aspin argue, by the jealous defense of individual service prerogatives, and by the inability of the nation's military leaders to exercise effective command over multiservice contingents. Suppressing interservice rivalries and enhancing the authority of joint commands, the legislators contend, will allow the military to fight effectively. Hart's prescription for military reform is elaborate, allowing only a cursory analysis here. Among his main recommendations are the formation of a National Defense Staff with far more authority to plan and conduct military operations than the existing Joint Chiefs of Staff, and a revitalized officer corps that would rate combat proficiency over managerial dexterity in awarding promotions. Hart evinces great admiration for "the tactical and operational excellence that so strongly marked the old German army." He hopes that a new two-year program at the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College "can do the same for us" that the *Kriegsakademie* did for German officers. While the Reagan Administration "has resisted military reform every step of the way," *New Choices* asserts, "Democrats have been out front beating the drum" for progress in this area. "For us, military reform is a priority of our party and a necessity for our nation."

The emerging Democratic Party security policy represents a distinct alternative to the Reagan policies of the past six years—but not necessarily one that is likely to cheer proponents of arms control and nonintervention. While it is too early to determine if these views will be adopted by the party as a whole, there is evidence that what Hart calls "the military reform movement" will shape Democratic policy in 1988, no matter who is nominated for President.

The coalescing Democratic security program excludes some issues. Neither Hart's book nor the D.P.C.'s report takes a stand, for example, on U.S. military intervention in Central America, reflecting the party's division on that question. And no Democrat seems willing to propose either a large increase or decrease in Pentagon spending.

But if intense anticommunism and the bolstering of conventional forces sounds familiar, it's because they were the heart of the security policy of the Kennedy Administration. Back then, they led to U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Whether the current policy effort will have a similar outcome depends largely on whether most Democrats embrace it or seek an alternative to Reaganism that does not substitute one brand of militarism for another. □



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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Official Trips

ANDREW WEIL

ACID DREAMS: The C.I.A., L.S.D. and the Sixties Rebellion. *By Martin A. Lee and Bruce Shlain. Grove Press. 343 pp. $27.50. Paper $12.95.*

In *Acid Dreams*, Martin A. Lee and Bruce Shlain document the psychedelic revolution from the early 1950s through the 1970s. The dominant characters in the first part of this curious history are intelligence officers, military personnel and an array of scientists working directly or indirectly for the U.S. government. The middle of the report tells how psychedelic drugs escaped from secret laboratories and got into the hands of people like Aldous Huxley, Richard Alpert, Timothy Leary, Allen Ginsberg, Ken Kesey and other enthusiasts who popularized them. The last section looks at the central role of L.S.D. in shaping the politics and culture of the 1960s. Although the book is engaging throughout, the first section is remarkable—at once entertaining and disturbing. Lee and Shlain sifted through mountains of heavily censored reports to piece together the early history of L.S.D. in this country. What emerges would be a surreal comedy—the Keystone Cops on dope—except for the fact that the actors took themselves seriously and caused a lot of harm.

Scientists in the intelligence agencies have long been fascinated with psychoactive drugs as tools and weapons of their trade. During World War II the Office of Strategic Services (O.S.S.), the Central Intelligence Agency's wartime predecessor, instituted a secret program to come up with a "truth drug" that could be used to break down the psychological defenses of suspects during interrogation. Researchers selected marijuana for the job and prepared a potent liquid extract of it which was put in food and cigarettes and tried on witting and unwitting subjects. After the war, the C.I.A. continued the experiments using barbiturates, amphetamines, marijuana, cocaine and heroin in various combinations, none of which quite did the trick. Imagine then the agency's delight when it learned of an odorless, tasteless compound that in amounts too small to be visible could cause hallucinations, delusions and extreme changes in mood. A Swiss chemist had discovered those properties of L.S.D. in 1943 and ten years later the C.I.A. was actively experimenting with it in mock interrogation trials and waxing enthusiastic about its potential as a mind-control agent. Most of the early scientific research on L.S.D. in the United States was encouraged and funded by the C.I.A., usually through front institutions. Most of the psychiatrists who studied the "psychotomimetic" (psychosis-mimicking) effects of L.S.D. in the 1950s were either C.I.A. contract employees or recipients of C.I.A. funds.

Some of the human experiments carried out by those men were not very nice, to say the least. Dr. Ewen Cameron of McGill University in Montreal (he served at various times as president of the Canadian, American and World Psychiatric Associations) developed an L.S.D.-assisted brainwashing technique, which he tested as a "treatment" for schizophrenia on fifty-three patients at McGill. He sedated them for months at a time ("sleep therapy"), then "depatterned" them with massive electroshock treatment and frequent doses of L.S.D.; finally, he had them listen to tape-recorded messages, repeated up to a quarter-million times, during further periods of heavy sedation. Nine of those patients have sued the U.S. government for $1 million each, claiming that they never agreed to participate in the experiments.

Dr. Harris Isbell, head of research at the Federal Addiction Research Center in Lexington, Kentucky, and the darling of such agencies as the National Institute of Mental Health and the Food and Drug Administration, also dosed human subjects with L.S.D. while on the C.I.A. payroll. His subjects were mostly black heroin addicts incarcerated at Lexington for treatment of their narcotics habits. Isbell gave some of them "double, triple and quadruple" doses for more than seventy-five consecutive days, using payments of heroin and morphine to entice volunteers.

As research interest in L.S.D. grew during the 1950s, the C.I.A. started to monitor all studies of the drug, whether conducted by people in its pay or by independent investigators. The agency also struck up a cordial relationship with Sandoz Laboratories, the Swiss manufacturer, which agreed to advise the C.I.A. whenever new L.S.D. was produced or a shipment was delivered to a customer.

The agency's major drug and mind-control operation, code-named MK-ULTRA, was devised by Richard Helms and authorized by Allen Dulles. Its director was the sinister chemist Sidney Gottlieb, who comes across in *Acid Dreams* as a pharmacological Dr. Strangelove. Gottlieb enjoyed lacing cocktails with L.S.D., and he did it at C.I.A. functions to see what would happen. One victim, an Army scientist, Dr. Frank Olson, killed himself as a result of Gottlieb's prank. Inspired by Gottlieb and working on the assumption that good intelligence agents ought to be able to handle surprise acid trips, C.I.A. men began slipping each other L.S.D. at office parties. Gottlieb then moved on to the ultimate phase of MK-ULTRA: dosing unsuspecting targets outside the agency with L.S.D. With the assistance of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, he obtained the services of George Hunter White, a top nark. According to Lee and Shlain,

> [White] rented an apartment in New York's Greenwich Village, and with funds supplied by the CIA he transformed it into a safehouse complete with two-way mirrors, surveillance equipment, and the like. Posing as an artist and a seaman, White lured people back to his pad and slipped them drugs. . . . The frequency of bad reactions prompted White to coin his own code word for the drug: "Stormy". . . .
>
> In 1955 White was transferred to San Francisco, where two more safehouses were established. During this period he initiated Operation Midnight Climax, in which drug-addicted prostitutes were hired to pick up men from local bars and bring them back to a CIA-financed bordello. Unknowing customers were treated to drinks laced with LSD while White sat on a portable toilet behind two-way mirrors, sipping martinis and watching every stoned and kinky moment.

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Those experiments continued uninterrupted until 1963. The results impressed the C.I.A. enough so that it developed plans for using L.S.D. operationally. One scheme was to slip the drug to leftist politicians in foreign countries when they were about to give public speeches. Gottlieb actually carried supplies of L.S.D. overseas on several occasions with this purpose in mind.

Meanwhile the U.S. Army toyed with the idea of driving whole populations insane with hallucinogenic drugs. By the mid-1960s nearly 1,500 military personnel had taken L.S.D. in tests run by the Army Chemical Corps. Some later complained that their superior officers had pressured them into volunteering and that they suffered psychological disturbances long afterward. Some found themselves tripping unexpectedly after being dosed with acid at mess parties. The Army then moved on to a more powerful chemical hallucinogen called B.Z., tested at Edgewood Arsenal between 1959 and 1975. In that period about 2,800 soldiers were exposed to the drug. A number of them have also lodged complaints, saying they were permanently changed by the experience.

Perhaps the most distinctive property of L.S.D. and its relatives is the extreme unpredictability of reactions to it. Not everyone who takes it becomes disoriented, confused and crazy. Some people feel little. Some become ecstatic. Some have transcendental experiences they consider of great personal value. Eventually the C.I.A. and the military gave up investigating psychedelic drugs as weapons precisely because of their unpredictability, but, inevitably, some of the research subjects decided they liked the psychedelic experience very much. They told their friends about the wonders of L.S.D. and, quite naturally, other people came to want the experience.

Directly and indirectly the government-sponsored research produced a generation of psychedelic pioneers and enthusiasts who were to introduce L.S.D., mescaline and psilocybin to hosts of intellectuals, artists, musicians and students. Those early tripsters, in turn, introduced the substances to middle-class youth just in time for the turbulence of the 1960s.

Acid Dreams documents this history thoroughly and carefully. As fantastic as some of the stories are, Lee and Shlain provide extensive references to authenticate their work. I was involved in some of this history—as an undergraduate editor of the Harvard *Crimson* from 1960 to 1964, I covered Richard Alpert and Timothy Leary's earliest work with psychedelics and also experimented with mescaline. *Acid Dreams* accurately reports the portion of the story that I know from experience. The book reinforces beliefs I have had for some time. To begin with, it emphasizes how much a part of American society drugs have been and still are. In the current period of hysteria fomented by the Reagan Administration, I hear more and more calls for a "drug-free America"; indeed, the White House has introduced a "Drug-Free America Act" in Congress. But that concept is absurd. Not only is our society heavily committed to the continued use and abuse of alcohol, tobacco and caffeine—the approved intoxicants never mentioned by Mr. and Mrs. Reagan—but our involvement with disapproved of substances like marijuana, cocaine and the psychedelics also has deep and complex roots.

Acid Dreams makes sobering as well as entertaining reading in the midst of the present war on drugs. It shows quite clearly the government's complicity in the drug problem and argues against the possibility of wishing disapproved of substances out of existence. Certainly it points up the folly of the simple-minded course now so popular in the executive and legislative branches of our government. □

The Occupying Passion

MARIA MARGARONIS

THE SEA WALL. *By Marguerite Duras. Harper & Row. 288 pp. $6.95.*

THE LOVER. *By Marguerite Duras. Pantheon. 117 pp. $11.95. Paper $5.95.*

THE WAR. *By Marguerite Duras. Pantheon. 183 pp. $13.95.*

This year Marguerite Duras, grand old lady of the French literary left, declared herself a Reaganite. In a conversation with her old Resistance comrade François Mitterrand (translated in the August *Harper's*), she praised her new hero: "I think he is the incarnation of a kind of primal, almost archaic, power." Such rightward migrations are more the rule than the exception now in France, but in Duras's case the passage has been political only in the most private, accidental sense. The qualities that have led her to admire Reagan are intimately and perversely linked to the ones that have made her a great writer, even a great writer of the left. Duras is a saboteur of moral conventions, a pioneer of candor, a historian of intuitions. There have been times, like May 1968, when her talents could be hitched to a heroic political engine, but she is interested in means, not ends. In her subjective universe, Reagan's anti-intellectual bluntness takes on a revolutionary spin.

For much of her long career, Duras has written extremely concentrated, stylized texts, film scripts and novels pared down to reveal the bare form of an emotional encounter. Like a set of musical variations, they recapitulate and transpose the same motifs: illicit love, betrayal, memory, loss. Many of them are set in the East, particularly in the French Indochina of her childhood, to which she has returned again and again to play out different versions of an obsessive, doomed love affair. Against a background of intense heat that bakes the plain, the rice paddies and the white colonial villas, a woman is transfigured by an irresistible passion. The long moment of her desire is fractured and multiplied by repetition and memory until it shakes her whole life, bending together liberation and destruction. The heroine of the novel *The Ravishing of Lol Stein* (1964) endlessly relives her first abandonment in a voyeuristic affair with the lover of her best friend. Lol's lost fiancé reappears in *India Song* (1973), where four contrapuntal voices reconstruct his love for an ambassador's wife. And in *Hiroshima, Mon Amour*, a film made in 1960 with Alain Resnais and the only one of Duras's more minimalist works to please American sensibilities, a night with a Japanese man unearths a Frenchwoman's memory of her first love, a German soldier occupying her country. Her desire for the new foreigner, built in the place, to use Duras's word, that death has "preserved," is a temporary unforgetting of what is permanently lost, a joy that shares its skin with destruction.

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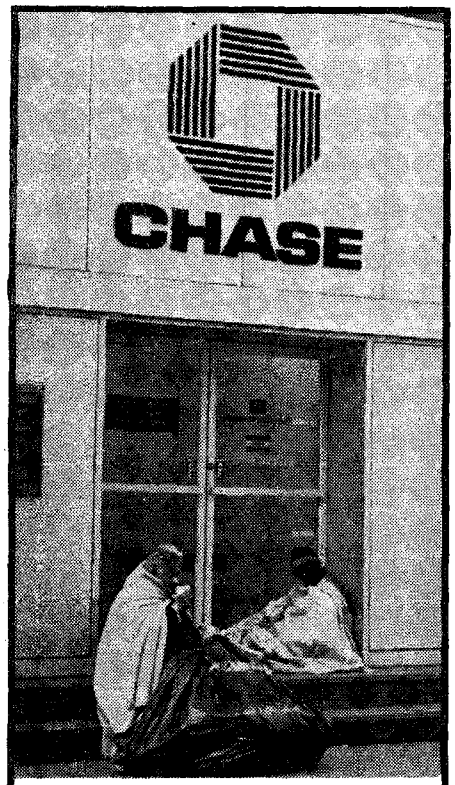

Mel Rosenthal

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In her most recent books, *The Lover* and *The War*, Duras has turned to confession and autobiography, and to a more direct exploration of the interconnectedness of love and power. These texts—call them novels or memoirs—draw their uncanny force from Duras's refusal to submit her life to any single reading: she writes often as if she were a stranger to herself, the inquisitor of her past as well as its apologist. "The story of my life doesn't exist," she says in *The Lover*. "There's never any center to it. No path, no line." In fact, the landscape of her work is veined with alternate routes. The pronouns shift from "I" to "she" to "you," and we follow her obediently into a maze of love and shame and dual loyalties, seduced by her candor, repelled by her narcissism and her arrogance: "Learn to read them properly," she warns of the last texts in *The War*. "They are sacred." The claim is extravagant; her conviction points both to the courage that has enabled Duras to investigate the links between impulses and feelings we prefer to keep distinct, and to the solipsism that skews her view of the outside world.

The Lover is essentially a reworking of the material Duras used in *The Sea Wall*, a straightforward, realistic novel first published in 1950. A young French girl lives with her mother and brothers in a run-down bungalow on the flat Pacific coast of French Indochina. They are poor but not hungry, living mainly on rice and the fishy black flesh of the stilt bird. The mother is bedraggled and depressed after years of struggling to make her small concession of land bear fruit. Her main ambition is to help her daughter escape, preferably to a respectable middle-class life in France. The girl is dreamy, thin, deathly bored. Enter a Chinese man, racially "inferior," flashy and the heir to untold wealth.

The Sea Wall is about poverty experienced as corrosive failure. As the Pacific eats away the barriers Ma has labored to build and floods the fields with salt, so poverty floods desire with greed and shame, occupying and obliterating the slightest possibility of love. The family seize on the Chinese as the solution to their financial problems; coached by her mother and brother, the girl tries to get him to propose. The empty, constipated courtship of the sentimental lecher and the vain adolescent is related in excruciating detail. In the grip of her family, the girl can have no erotic instinct that does not turn into a form of prostitution. When the Chinese offers her a diamond to go away to the city with him, she has learned enough to keep the gift without paying the price. Thrilled and tormented by the "sparkler," Ma beats her daughter to get her to confess that she has slept with the man. To escape the blows, she lies and says she has.

In *The Lover*, the girl does sleep with the Chinese. The wall against the Pacific has collapsed more completely, and the leveling force has turned from greedy poverty to hungry desire—the familiar torrential desire begotten by despair upon impossibility. The book is intimate, searching, oddly disjointed. "Before," writes Duras, "I spoke of clear periods, those on which the light fell. Now I'm talking about the hidden stretches of that same youth." The language itself, spare and repetitive, seems to bear the imprint of an immense pressure. We are in a no man's land between truth and fiction, where memory is stroked and shaped by longing.

The girl, in this version, is queerly beautiful, both innocent and knowing, a child and a woman; her body understands what she can't yet express. It is she who seduces the Chinese, who asks him "to do as you usually do with women. . . . to do it again and again." Their relationship is a prism where limits dissolve: tenderness meets cruelty and love embraces contempt. The girl's desire for the man is sharpened by the knowledge it brings her of loss, emptiness and shame, and by the thrill of her passive power over him, which is like her mother's power over her:

> Today I tell him it's a comfort, this sadness, a comfort to have fallen at last into a misfortune my mother has always predicted for me when she shrieks in the desert of her life. . . . I tell him one day I'll leave my mother, one day even for my mother I'll have no love left. I weep. He lays his head on me and weeps to see me weep.

The "harsh pleasure" the man gives her is close kin to the "terrible harshness" of her family, and her experience of love is illuminated until every dark facet has been revealed. It is not only her mother's despair that has seeped into the young girl's life but the tyranny of her hated elder brother, who absorbs the mother's love and pins his siblings in a shadow of fear. In his presence, the girl's desire is choked and the Chinese lover becomes "an unmentionable out-

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rage, a cause of shame who ought to be kept out of sight"; but the brother is also there in their lovemaking, adding the sadomasochistic spice of loathing. She likes it when the Chinese "takes" her violently and with insults: "He calls me a whore, a slut, he says I'm his only love, and that's what he ought to say, and what you do say when you just let things say themselves, when you let the body alone, to seek and find and take what it likes, and then everything is right, and nothing's wasted, the waste is covered over and all is swept away in the torrent, in the force of desire." It is typical of Duras's courage that she does not stop at this, but allows her romantic image of sexual transport its full resonance with a more frightening kind of power and occupation. In an extraordinary passage, she conflates her brother, who later collaborates with the Nazis, with her forbidden lover and with the war itself:

> I see the war as like him, spreading everywhere, breaking in everywhere, stealing, imprisoning, always there, merged and mingled with everything, present in the body, in the mind, awake and asleep, all the time, a prey to the intoxicating passion of occupying that delightful territory, a child's body, the bodies of those less strong, of conquered peoples. Because evil is there, at the gates, against the skin.

In *The War*, a collection of memoirs about Duras's life in the Paris Resistance in World War II, the knot of power is turned so that its dark side is uppermost. The dazzling heat haze is gone; Duras herself, a grown woman now, is a more solid figure. And the terms under direct investigation are the shadows stitched to the heels of desire in *The Sea Wall* and *The Lover*: complicity, violence, betrayal. The three main texts in the book form a kind of triptych.

The first, "The War," is a harrowing story of powerlessness and need, a detailed account of Duras's vigil for her husband, Robert L., who was a prisoner in the concentration camps. The writing is splintered into tiny, sharp sentences, pointing every which way, fixed painfully in the claustrophobic space of waiting. She records every twist of anxiety, every abrupt reversal of her thoughts as she paces her apartment or stands for hours in the Gare d'Orsay collecting information about released prisoners. At one moment she is convinced her husband is dead, imagines his body lying in a ditch; at the next, she is calculating the number of days and hours until his return. There is a kind of generous love here that Duras has not often addressed.

When Robert L. eventually does return (rescued by none other than François Mitterrand), his emaciated, terrifying body replaces Duras's tortured thoughts at the center of the narrative. In her flat, relentless voice she describes the sticklike limbs, the shrunken neck, the strange, inhuman face until they seem to incarnate all the complicated horror of the war. Robert L. is a human being and yet monstrous, a thing; his perverse condition embroils everyone who loves him in a vivid nightmare. At first, to save his life, he must be denied food, just as he was in the concentration camp; as he recovers, he becomes sheer appetite: "I used to watch him from the sitting-room door. I didn't go in. For two weeks, three, I watched him eat with unremitting pleasure. I couldn't get used to it either. Sometimes his pleasure made me weep, too. He didn't see me. He'd forgotten me." To the end he remains distant, a holy martyr; when he is well, having gone with him through the valley of death, Duras asks for a divorce so that she can have a child with his best friend. It is as if they have lived out their love to its conclusion. The skull beneath the skin can never recede, and Robert L. must always remain both more and less than human. "The War" ends with an almost liturgical hero's elegy:

> Then I spoke of Robert L.'s special grace here below, of his own peculiar grace which carried him through the camps—the intelligence, the love, the reading, the politics, and all the inexpressible things of all the days; that grace peculiar to him but made up equally of the despair of all.

If Robert L. is a kind of sacrificial lamb, Duras herself, in the rest of the book, plays the dual role of sinner and confessor. The second piece, "Monsieur X, Here Called Pierre Rabier," relates the cat-and-mouse courtship of Duras by the Gestapo agent who arrested her husband. The piece is a study in the banality of evil—Rabier is a cultured, charming man, "absolutely indifferent to human suffering in general, but indulging himself in the luxury of his own forms of squeamishness." But it is also an investigation of betrayal. Duras begins by meeting Rabier to maintain contact with the French prisoners he guards; then, because the danger is too great, she agrees to help her fellow Re-

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sistance members kill him, becoming what he might have been to her: "his policeman, the one through whom he'll die." Though the moral framework of the memoir is clear—to emphasize the difference between herself and the Nazi, Duras explains that she carefully testified at his trial about those he had spared as well as those he had sent to their death—its dramatic effect is more ambiguous. Duras fears and despises Rabier, but she also comes to understand him, to be touched by his small kindnesses and the luxuries he offers her. She is ashamed not only of dining with him but of deceiving him. Their relationship, a power struggle disguised as a courtship, where nothing can be said or done that is not tainted, is not unlike the relationship between the heroine and her Chinese suitor—also wealthy, also a ticket to material pleasures—in *The Sea Wall.*

The last panel of the triptych, "Albert of the Capitals, Ter of the Militia," finds Duras unquestionably in power. Ter is a young collaborator arrested by the Resistance for whom she feels sympathy, even desire. And Albert is the contact of an informer, never named, whom Duras tortures. The description of the torture is blunt, unsparing, like the description of Robert L.'s starving body. And the complicated thoughts of Duras, the torturer, are here too, without judgment or distance: the dissociation, the concentrated attention, the anxiety, the rage, all coming up at the right moment to accomplish the work of battering a man's body until a single word is dug out, the answer to an irrelevant question, "What color was the identity card that got you into the Gestapo?"

> [She] looks at the fists falling, hears the gong of the blows, realizes for the first time that in a man's body there are layers almost impossible to pierce. Tier upon tier of deep truths difficult to reach. . . . Now it's exhausting, almost impossible. Demolition work. Blow by blow. . . . The work is going on far away, in that solitary chest of his. They hit him in the stomach. The informer howls, clutches his stomach with both hands, writhes. Albert draws closer, deals him a blow in the private parts. He covers his genitals with both hands and howls some more. He's bleeding copiously from the face.

By the end of this, you know what it is to torture a person, almost as if you had been there in the room, deciding with Duras's watching comrades whether to stay or go. As a reader, it is almost impossible not to stay. The most frightening thing about this piece of writing is the pleasure in it: if *The Lover* gave desire its full complement of cruelty and shame, "Albert of the Capitals" reveals, through the rhythms and images of the prose, the sexual undertow of torture.

It may be that the conservative in Duras intends this text to support her claim, in *The Lover*, that the collaborators and the French Communist Party, which formed the backbone of the Resistance, were "the same":

> The parallel is complete and absolute. The two things are the same, the same pity, the same call for help, the same lack of judgment, the same superstition if you like, that consists in believing in a political solution to the personal problem.

But the radical in her undercuts any such simplistic reading by allowing the writing its full moral complexity, refusing to let it point in any single, manageable direction.

In Duras's world, the love of power and the power of love can seem almost interchangeable: sex and torture both strike at the hinge between language and the body, and force the flesh to "ejaculate its truth." Her unsettling strength as a writer stems from her obsessive need to probe that connection and her own involvement in it; so, in a way, do her idiosyncratic politics. In her earlier, more stylized work, written under the influence of a kind of literary Maoism, Duras used erotic dissolution to suggest the revolutionary moment that would bring us back to "absolute zero" and enable us to remake the world. She showed no interest in the arrangements that might follow that moment; from the beginning, her work has been concerned with the process by which boundaries are broken and internal truths are changed. As revolution has fallen out of fashion, Duras has searched for a new catalyst for ecstasy. For her, it is the flaying intensity of the experience that counts, not its purpose or moral meaning. While she likes to cast herself as a rebel, she also loves to imagine herself in the grip of some manly force that leaves her no will, no choice, that produces an explosion of contradictory emotions. In her polymorphously perverse morality play, Ronald Reagan has slipped easily into the Janus-faced role of conqueror and seducer—a suitably subversive lover for the comrade of François Mitterrand. ☐

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Objects of Desire

BRINA CAPLAN

THE PROGRESS OF LOVE. *By Alice Munro. Alfred A. Knopf. 309 pp. $16.95.*

All happy and unhappy families are alike in that they have stories to tell. Growing up we learn the family myths: How Mama and Papa met and immediately loved or despised each other. How Great-aunt Edna faced down the neighborhood bully. How cousin Max nearly killed off the whole clan the first time he sat behind the wheel of the Hudson. We hear about fortunate meetings and lucky escapes, about characteristic and characterizing events that satisfy the family's need to see in the way things are the way things had to be.

A family story is never purposeless: If it toys with grim happenstance or annihilation, it's only in order to dismiss those possibilities as outcomes for us. A mily version of historical inevitability rks to shape the past so that it re- cts the present. And, as a result, the ng Max or Edna or our courting ents are seen from a kind of audito- n perspective. They become remote, matic figures whose gestures are ster- yped and whose choices follow a l-plotted course. Although we may w these people intimately as they are , the confused immediacy of their ng lives is lost to us.

hen an Alice Munro story knocks back in your chair—and several in ew collection, *The Progress of Love*, the power to push on you good hard—it's often because she's up- ed this perspective. Munro writes bss generational lines, making the so vivid it undermines our belief t the present is the true locus of ex- ience. She writes histories of lives t ought to seem foreign. Many of characters come of age in a world ving collars, outdoor plumbing and houses. Yet Munro's people are con- mporary with their own choices, un- rtainty and pain, and that makes them ur contemporaries. If their decisions ave come to look inevitable from their randchildren's point of view, from with- the lives of the actors themselves, they are nevertheless urgent, risky and up for grabs.

In the title story, a city-dwelling real-estate agent, the divorced mother of two boys, carries a childhood memory, a fantasy really, of the moment forty years before when her mother burned up a $3,000 inheritance while her farmer father just stood by. As Euphemia—or Fame as she now calls herself—reconstructs it, this is a love scene. Her mother, Marietta, needed to reject what she saw as a tainted gift from her own father. And although their cash-poor farm could easily have absorbed every penny, Marietta's husband regarded the money as hers and therefore none of his say. It's the restrained and unencroaching loyalty of her father's love that impresses Fame—a quality she's found hard to come by in her own more intense but temporary relationships. (After her divorce, one fellow asks, "Fame . . . just what is it you are famous for?" Her reply: "I don't know, unless it's for wasting my time talking to jerks like you.") This story compares styles of loving: the modern way of moment-by-moment engagement to "those old marriages, where love and grudges could be growing underground, so confused and stubborn, it must have seemed they had forever."

A comparison isn't the same thing as a conclusion, though; it only acknowledges differences. It would be wrong to suggest that Munro comes to a judgment about whether love in our time has been progressing, regressing or just barely holding its own. Conclusive judgments aren't her strength, and in this her fifth collection of stories they are always secondary to a dramatic evocation of events. Rather than an interpretation of lives, *The Progress of Love* offers a rich involvement in their particulars.

The particulars are complex, sometimes calling for more than one point of view. Fame, for example, comes to possess two versions of the story that explains why Marietta so hated her own dead father that she would burn his bequest bill by bill. In childhood, Marietta had watched her mother struggle to hold a straying husband. During one crisis of jealousy, the girl was sent to find her father while her mother stood in the barn on a teetering chair with a rope around her neck. Marietta tore

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desperately through muddy streets, exhausted herself, but failed to find him. She then raced home in fear:

> A train was coming into town. Marietta had to wait. Passengers looked out at her from its windows. She broke out wailing in the faces of those strangers. When the train passed, she continued up the hill—a spectacle, with her hair uncombed, her feet bare and muddy, in her nightgown, with a wild, wet face. By the time she ran into her own yard, in sight of the barn, she was howling. "Mama!" she was howling. "Mama!"
>
> Nobody was there. The chair was standing just where it had been before. The rope was dangling over the back of it. Marietta was sure that her mother had gone ahead and done it. Her mother was already dead—she had been cut down and taken away.

Marietta is brought into a neighbor's kitchen. There her little sister is playing with the cat, while her mother is sitting at the table, having a cup of coffee and laughing. Marietta faints.

Her mother was laughing: Had she actually been about to kill herself? "Her heart was broken," says the grown-up Marietta, passing on to Fame a now consolidated myth of men's easy cruelty. That's too simple an accounting, though, and this version becomes suspect when Fame's city-sophisticated Aunt Beryl makes a one-time visit to the farm. She tells her twelve-year-old niece that the rope was never tied to anything; it was merely flung over the barn beam. "She meant to get a rise out of Daddy," says Beryl, "that was their whole life together." There's no final truth to be ferreted out here. Munro doesn't resolve contradictions, she layers them, building her stories from an accumulation of hard-edged emotional scenes that slide against and over one another like shuffled cards.

Although she can usually make this method pay off, in *The Progress of Love* the results are uneven. Several stories are teasing rather than satisfying. In "Lichen," "Fits" and "The Moon in the Orange Street Skating Rink," something is missing. Not an ability to envision reality: Munro provides dazzling and intensely felt incidents. And not mastery of form: the incidents in each story are technically well related. What's missing is deep structure, the understanding that sustains resemblances between one incident and the next, making of them a meaningful whole. If old family stories risk boring us because they insist on prescribed meanings, Alice Munro stories run the opposite risk, that of frittering away our interest, because they refuse to develop any specific meaning.

Munro sometimes tries to avoid the problem by attaching to the end of a story a tag that explains how to assimilate what's been set before us. "White Dump," the last story of the collection, closes in this way with two dour lines from *The Poetic Edda* (a major character is a Scandinavian linguist): "Seinat er at segia;/svá er nu rádit," which translates, "It is too late to talk of this now: it has been decided." As rhetoric, this dose of Nordic pessimism is effective. But the lines polish off a story of domestic disintegration in the 1960s, rather than drawing its elements together. In "White Dump" there are no *Götterdämmerung*-style events, so an ancient vision of universal doom has little to do with what Munro actually shows us—the irritations, strains and emotional wounds of family life.

"White Dump" is another of Munro's cross-generational stories, taking place not only in the 1980s and 1960s but also in the remote past of a grandmother's childhood. It begins with Denise, director of a women's center, paying a visit to her father and his new wife at the family's summer home. Her return revives memories of the birthday surprise she had arranged for her father some seventeen years earlier. That July day, Denise's family—all except her mother, Isabel—went up for a ride in a small, chartered plane. In their utter delight, the family drew together. Laurence, Denise's father, left off his usual sniping at his daughter and his contentious wrangling with his mother, a strong-willed academic, whom he once called the "Old Norse."

There are intimations of disintegration, though, at the very moment of family unity. Laurence's mother, Sophie, senses her own death and something beyond—perhaps the meaninglessness of all human designs:

> The little plane seemed not to be moving at all. . . . They hovered in the air, a thousand feet or so off the ground. Below were juniper bushes spread like pincushions in the fields, cedars charmingly displayed like toy Christmas trees. . . . That toylike, perfect tininess of everything had a peculiar and distressing effect on Sophie. She felt as if it was she, not the things on earth, that had shrunk, was still shrinking—or that they were all shrinking together. This feeling was so strong it caused a tingle in her now tiny, crablike hands and feet—a tingle of exquisite smallness, an awareness of exquisite smallness.
>
> . . .
>
> Still shrinking . . . but not vanishing, she held herself up there. . . . and said to her grandchildren, Look here, look there, see the shapes on the earth, see the shadows and the light going down in the water.

More immediately disruptive to the family than the nothingness Sophie fears, however, is Isabel's marital restlessness.

When the plane lands, Isabel comes face to face with the charter pilot, the man who will break up her marriage. Isabel's is one of those marriages that holds together because she manages everything all the time: her husband's temper, her children's needs and the stew for dinner. She finds herself sometimes nostalgic about her working-class childhood and oddly anxious about the pres-

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goes to slime and earthy smell. Dangle a pink worm
speckled with dirt crumbs and count its pullups,
its liquid oozy going, its wrinkled fattening coming back.

The grass, you will find, is nearly white.
Pull your tragic faces, loving the chance to make it
green again, loving the black Kordite
roughed plump with a load of lightness.
Love the final spin you give it, the stiff
yellow twist to keep death in its place.

Ron Smith

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ent: "It seemed all the time that she was having to provide a little more—in the way of attention, enthusiasm, watchfulness—than she was sure she had." It's as though a once simple path between desire and the objects of desire had become impassable, overgrown with contradictory claims, compromises and commitments.

A symbol for what has been lost is the unambiguous sweetness of sugar candy. Isabel explains that when she was a child, her elementary school bordered on a cookie factory. Every now and then, she says,

> they'd sweep up these quantities of vanilla icing and nuts and hardened marshmallow globs and they'd bring it in barrels and dump it back there and it would shine. It would shine like a pure white mountain. Over at the school, somebody would see it and yell, "White Dump!" and after school we'd all climb over the fence. . . . It was something about the White Dump—that there was so much and it was so white and shiny. It was like a kid's dream—the most wonderful promising thing you could ever see.

Her affair with the pilot begins in a small white hut on the deserted airfield, where physical passion renews her sense of promise. But the outcome is difficult and ultimately uncertain. She divorces; the pilot remains with his wife. She goes on to a series of relationships the last of which her daughter calls "troubled."

Is this a story about the impersonality of fate? That's what Munro's closing lines suggest. But doesn't Isabel's plight have more to do with glittering promises of domesticity, with what the 1960s expected of wives and mothers, with the bafflement of childhood yearnings? Although "White Dump" provokes these questions about responsibility and destiny, the story line is not developed in a way that allows answers. Instead of how things got to be this way, "White Dump" presents how things are—the characters' own experience of themselves as creatures in time. And this is a short story with a long time perspective. It includes Sophie's Edwardian childhood at the lake house in an era of privilege and largesse, Denise's very different, anxious girlhood in the same house and Isabel's solitary growing-up in a poor city neighborhood. Throughout the story, the point of view shifts with the ease of reminiscence from character to character and from the far past to the near past to the present. The result is an illusion of real time that's rare in short fiction—an almost sculptural dimensionality.

In fact, Alice Munro is very much a sculptor, and these new stories might best be regarded as bas-reliefs, where the artist has won from resistant material lively scenes of human activity. As an art form, bas-relief is always technically astonishing: the figures are caught in mid-motion, the sensations of depth and distance are evoked although little of either is permitted by the medium. You wind up wondering how so much can go into such a small space. If Munro's short fiction shares the virtues of bas-relief, though, it also shares the limitations of this form. After all, viewed from certain angles, those just barely three-dimensional figures suddenly look incomplete, not fully disengaged from the raw substance. And that's the problem within *The Progress of Love*, where the meanings of many characters' lives remain unclear, waiting, in effect, for Munro to extract them from the stone. □

LETTERS.

(*Continued From Page 474*)

an "AIM Report," not a letter to ABC (the error is mine, not Robert Siegenthaler's), the charges are no less vague and unsubstantiated. Here's a sample: "ABC doesn't raise the question of why the U.S.S.R. during the détente of the 1970s engaged in the most massive arms build- :p in history." Try assigning a fact checker to research that one.

As for the spat with Capital Legal Foundation, my article does give Irvine's side, noting that "the immediate dispute came over Irvine's demand that the foundation provide documentation for how the money was spent." Much to Irvine's discomfort, my account goes beyond that statement to describe Capital Legal's real problems in working with AIM.

Irvine criticizes *The Nation* for not mentioning that AIM's second TV documentary "has been praised by President Reagan as a film that all Americans should see." I refer him to the very first page of my article, which quotes the President as noting that the documentary "was just great and is something all Americans should see."

I really do wish Irvine had taken up my more substantive points: Why does he take money from corporations he's involved in defending? Why does he regularly rush into print with allegations before proving them? Why does he engage in partisan political causes? Why does he insist on disrupting

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stockholder meetings? And why doesn't he bother to get the other side of the story, as common decency would demand?

Michael Massing

WOLFE REPLIES

Larchmont, N.Y.

Reed Irvine's response to the articles written by Michael Massing and myself is typical of his approach. The two "inaccuracies" he finds in my article, for example, are completely without foundation.

First is the matter of Bella Abzug. I cited Irvine's repeated efforts to drag up her political memberships of the 1940s when writing about her today. Irvine's response is to say that in his newsletters he has mentioned her only four times and cited her past only once. Yet Irvine's "humble efforts" include more than publishing a newsletter; he writes a column, gives speeches, makes telephone calls and talks to editors. In his syndicated column published on March 1, 1978, Irvine criticized *The New York Times* for writing about Abzug without noting that, in his words, "she has long worked hand-in-glove with those whose thoughts and deeds have been responsive to the totalitarians in the Kremlin." I leave it for the reader to judge whether language of this type is an effort to be accurate or to leave implications of treason.

Irvine's only other point is that I misrepresented—indeed turned upside down—his support for the F.C.C. In fact, Irvine has, as I suggested in my article, long supported F.C.C. efforts at regulation. During the Reagan years, of course, the F.C.C., like so many other agencies, has been staffed by people who are trying to overturn its historic mission. Thus anyone who supports government regulation of the airways, as does Irvine, would become a critic of the F.C.C.—but only since Reagan came to power. Irvine knows that. I know it. To raise the matter in the way he does is to engage in junior-high-school debating tactics.

Irvine had every chance to correct any perceived inaccuracies in my article, but he refused to respond to both letters and telephone calls. When he follows general rules of courtesy and journalistic convention and talks to people like me, he will make a more convincing case that accuracy is more his intention than ideological attack.

Alan Wolfe

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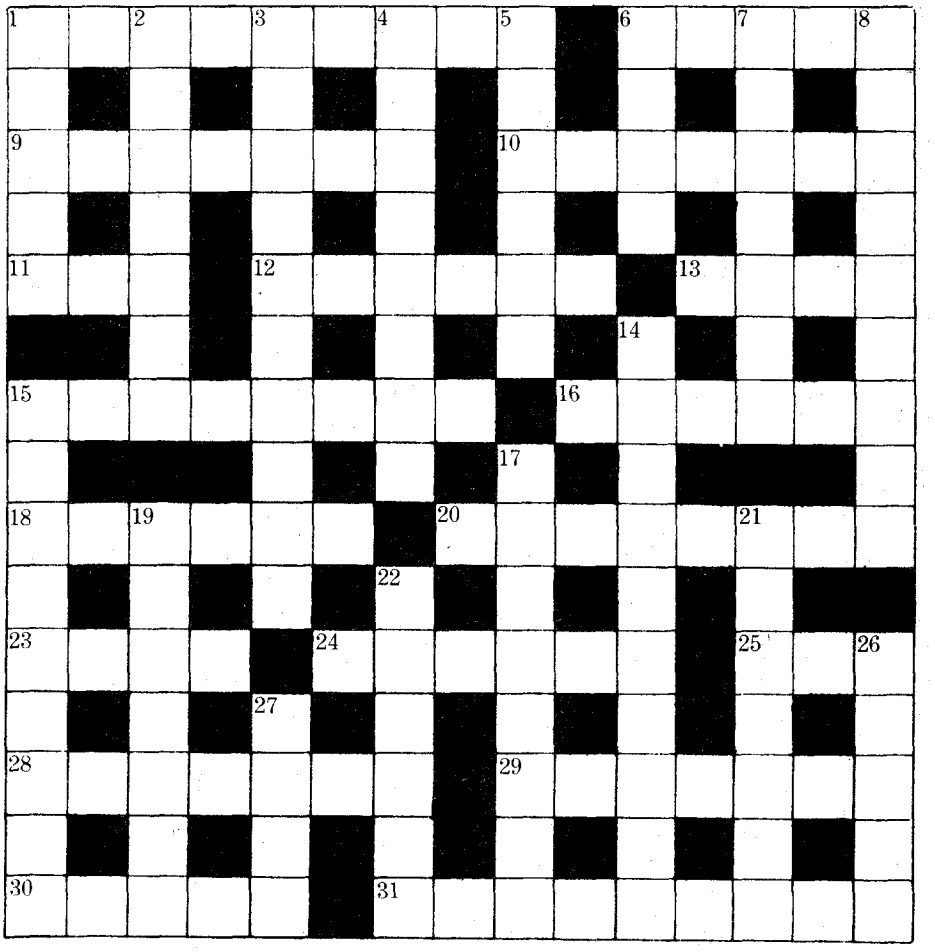

ACROSS

1 and 6 See 26 down
9 It's part of the influx, or I always get it! Just like my wife! (7)
10 The British don't have to go to the tower to take it, however. (4,3)
11 Enjoy a little sport? That's how a lot of Russians end up! (3)
12 Medusa, for example. (6)
13 At that time I got out of 26, which proved upsetting! (4)
15 The river is likely to have at least one—trust me! (4,2,2)
16 This German might be called a first one. (6)
18 The British might complain of their ladders—but we couldn't want to see them run over here! (6)
20 It's age was popular a decade or more ago. (Holds water, I suppose.) (8)
23 As to this, you're supposedly smart if you know yours! (4)
24 The troublemaker of 21 is without debt, and has a deed in force. (6)
25 It's baked, pounded, moistened and fermented! (3)
28 See 26 down
29 What an umpire might do to the runner? (Cancel this!) (4,3)
30 What was once used to measure certain things in New York City is good for her! (Sounds as though she should have a lot of rings!) (5)
31 The state of Williams? (A volunteer one, as they say.) (9)

DOWN

1 This is often followed very sincerely—but it certainly isn't mine! (5)
2 More writing describes such existence! (7)
3 One has a gang around with a few minutes of fighting—that's one way to win a little territory! (4,6)
4 One might be to dust. (8)
5 Sheridan's was scandalous! (6)
6 Small number of fruits?
7 They might allow for a little tightening of the chest, on producing them. (7)
8 Obviously the end of your yearly earnings—but they may indicate what you really want. (9)
14 A little firm with a Lett, perhaps, and seeming depressed—but it might be just what the painter wants. (6,4)
15 The best of customers at the Mermaid Tavern. (3,6)
17 It's supposed to have two or more flights. (8)
19 All rite? Not quite right—certainly not in a figurative sense! (7)
21 One of the fairly recent popes might have introduced himself, but out of character if so. (That's what the mischief-maker should have to pay for . . . (7)
22 . . . describing his picture!) (If you do, that would be telling!) (6)
26, 28 and 1 and 6 across Part of the poem starts out by implying that in certain acrobatics, a lad might be very far from plain. (2,3,6,1,5,4,5)
27 Just with a person lying to prove it's there? (4)

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